

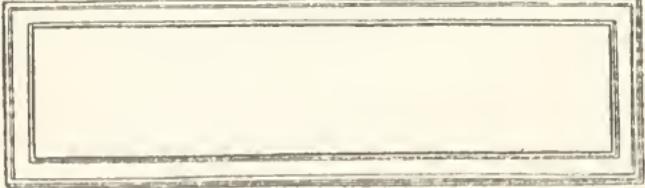
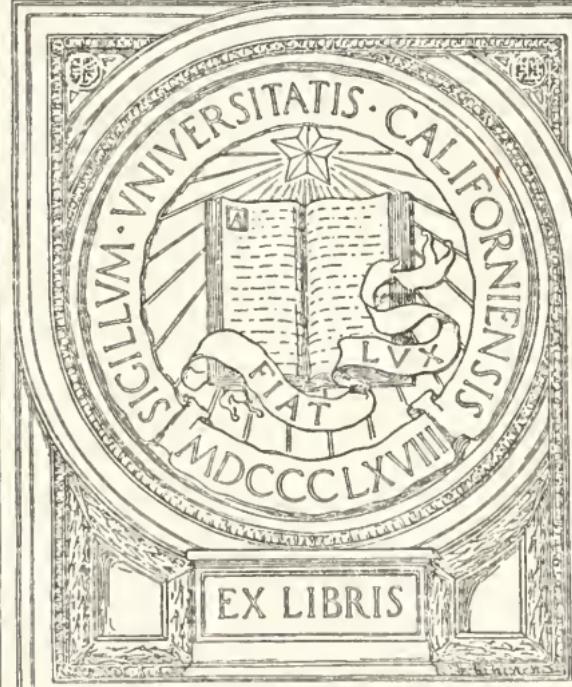
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# S E L F.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL."

"Put gall in thy ink, though thou write with a goose-quill."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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## S E L F.

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### CHAPTER I.

Ægritudinem laudare, unam rem maxime detestabilem quorum est tandem philosophorum?

CICERO.

Comme l'existence ressemble partout, à l'existence. En tout lieu, tout le monde attend quelque chose qui n'arrive jamais. On regarde fixement le rivage, comme si un vaisseau chargé de bonheur, venu on ne sait d'où, était sur le point d'entrer au port. Fatigué d'attendre, quelques uns vont au devant de cette arche mystérieuse, et ne reviennent plus!

GOZLAN.

MORE than two years elapsed after the death of Philip Askham's lamented wife, undistinguished by the occurrence of any memorable event at Eden Castle. The sadness of deep mourning pervaded the place, nor was it pos-

sible to wear his broad hems with more studied propriety than the widower. His nature *seemed* to have profited by the shock it had sustained ; for he was a better father, master, neighbour, for having proved so indifferent a husband.

Thanks to the vigilance of Susan and tender care of Selina, the poor child denounced from its birth as unrearable, was still alive. But though affording constant grounds for anxiety and commiseration, so far from remaining an object of disgust to its surviving parent, as much indulgence was conceded to the future representative of the House of Askham, as was compatible with the condition of an ever-ailing child.

In that weary interim, Selina had progressed in grace, intelligence, and beauty, as though there were still a dear mother to delight in her advancement ! An excellent governess presided over her education ; Sir Hugh having assigned to her use the interest of her mother's fortune, which, on Mrs. Saville's second marriage, was settled on the children. Though he chose to encumber the hands of the man he hated by the guardianship of his niece, no need

that, while her brother was enjoying the distinctions appropriate to the heir of Bayhurst, Selina should become dependent on the Askhams!

In every respect, the condition of the little girl was meliorated. Whenever Philip was tempted from his retreat, to visit Uppingham Manor, Eske Hill, or Hurstwood Castle, his sisters conditioned that Selina and her little charge should be his companions; not alone from compassion towards the forlornness of the little orphan, but from the charm exercised by her engaging manners on every one who approached her.

In Selina Saville, her mother's gentle gravity was united with all the lighter graces of childhood. An angelic expression tempered her sweet smile; and it was discriminately pointed out by Sir Thomas Lawrence, when he obtained permission, one autumn at Uppingham Manor, to add that exquisite head to his collection of sketches, that her long wavy hair, of the deepest auburn, seemed to emit a superhu-

man lustre, like that of some youthful saint in the pictures of Murillo.

Among the persons kindest in their attentions to her, was Lady Lynchmore ; and though the desire to conciliate a friend of Lady Grandison and protégé of Carlton House, might be the inostensible motive of her eager invitations to the motherless child, Philip was too well aware of the advantage of female companionship to a young girl, not to profit by the hospitalities of his neighbours.

The De Lacy's were frank, warm-hearted girls : Lady Emilia, the eldest, being now presented, and a beauty. But of the half-dozen, two were nearly the age of Selina Saville ; and by all of them, she was made a sort of pet at the Hall. There were no Jouvencières there now, to discredit the taste of its owners ; and the detection of the real vocation of the soi-disant émigrés had so placed the Countess on her guard, that, even with the certainty of deterioration to their minuets and gavottes, she contented herself with consigning the education

of her daughters to a well-informed English-woman ; under whose care they ran some risk of becoming nothing better than excellent mothers of families.

Selina was very happy among them. The De Lacy's loved her like a sister. They were even fond of poor little Percy for her sake, —and never passed old Susan without a kindly word,—or alluded without sorrowful deference to the memory of her mother. It was impossible to feel otherwise than affectionately towards such thoughtful friends ; and so long as Lord Delvyn was not at home to molest her by his boisterous pleasures, enjoyed with all the privilege of an eldest son spoiled by both father and mother, she was never better pleased than with the days spent at Hexham Hall. Lord Lynchmore was good-natured and mirth-loving as ever ; and even the foibles of his lady were diminished by the attainment of a surer footing in society ;—her artificial dignity having relaxed since her intimacy with Lady Grandison superseded all apprehension of being black-balled by the fashionable world.

Nothing could exceed the present popularity of the family. Lady Emilia was handsome and unaffected, Lord Delvyn one of the leading young men at Oxford; and, thanks to Lord Lynchmore's liberal assistance, the Carlton hounds were attaining a celebrity worthy the excellence of the country they had to run. Hexham, in short, possessed sufficient attractions for those whose society confers lustre on a country house, to overlook the distance of Edenbourne from the metropolis. While Eden Castle had become indeed a "dreary pile," the pleasantness of the Hall was proverbial.

All this was fortunate for Philip; who, as the first thing a man does who is at issue with himself, is usually to quarrel with his fellow-creatures, might otherwise have become an indolent misanthrope. But on a man like Lord Lynchmore, coldness or reserve was thrown away. To decline his invitations on the score of mental affliction, or any other score, was labour lost! Without delicacy of mind to perceive when his civilities were unac-

ceptable, he persisted and persisted, till he bored Philip into becoming his guest solely to get rid of him ; and once his guest, the cheerfulness of Hexham insured return.

For Philip Askham was still too young for his self-love to take the form of supineness. At one-and-thirty, he was far more attractive than at twenty-one ; the regular line of his features according better with his present figure and deportment. Strangers pronounced him to be a remarkably handsome man ; while those with whom he thought it worth while to form an intimacy, cited him as a remarkably agreeable one.

But if the history of the house of Askham remained uneventful, memorable indeed were the events which had marked in the interval the progress of public life. Overcome by domestic vexations and national misfortunes, the venerable King was once more a prey to the terrible disorder by which the nation had been already deprived of his protection ; while the popularity of the Prince of Wales was already grievously modified by the mistrust about

to involve the political career of the Prince Regent.

Nor was the position of the country much more satisfactory than that of its rulers. Cintra, Corunna, Walcheren, are names inscribed in the darker pages of our national history.—The kingdom of Hanover was annexed to that of Westphalia under the sceptre of a minor Bonaparte; the throne of Sweden filled by a *parvenu* soldier of the Republic. The empire of the new Cæsar mightier than all the twelve, included Rome, Paris, and Amsterdam, among its cities. But above all, a princess of the house of Hapsburg, an arch-haughty archduchess of Austria, had thankfully accepted the hand of Lord Askham's “blackguard Corsican;” and Rome the classical,—Rome the Christian,—beheld her titular kingdom assigned to the heir of the new dynasty!—The extension of Napoleon's dominions had been accomplished amid the fear and trembling of nations, like the triumphal march of a pestilence.

As in all extreme cases whatever promises a change seems to promise amendment, much

had been expected from the Regency;—the Whigs fondly flattering themselves that, so soon as the period of those restrictions expired which at present tied the hands if not the heart of the new potentate, they were sure of accession to power, which it was long since they had enjoyed for a sufficient space of time to secure the fruition of their policy.

“No, no!—hope nothing from the Prince!” said Lord Hardynge to his son, who was one of the most sanguine of the expectants. “I know him better than you do. Though the best-natured of men, his habits of life have rendered him supine and selfish. A creature of habit, he will attempt no changes likely to throw trouble on his hands, or responsibility on his head. The Prince is a timid politician. The influence of the Queen, of the Duke of York, and of others soon to become equally ostensible, has obtained sufficient ascendancy over his nature to insure the triumph of the Tories.”

To accredit his assertion, he playfully quoted the declaration of Aristophanes, that the dying

words of graybeards are prophetic. For alas ! he knew himself to be on the brink of the grave. The country was about to lose the benefit of his equitable heart, and lucid intellect. The hand of art had done its best to retard the evil day ; but a terrible operation having been vainly effected, even Cline now shook his head.

The birth of two beautiful grandchildren to perpetuate the honours his exertions had created, rendered it hard to die,—even to so great a philosopher,—even to so good a Christian ; and, bound to struggle against death at once for the sake of his family and of the nation, he was unwilling that his release should give pain to a circle so happy as that of Eske Hill, or deprive the country in its hour of adversity of a servant so zealously devoted.

More despondingly, still, however, were the affairs of Europe noted by the *detenu* at Verdun ; and grievous was the perplexity experienced by Philip in the prolonged adjustment of his affairs, which his ever-recurring follies served constantly to re-embarrass. A costly

*liaison* and large family of illegitimate children, aggravated the former evil results of the gaming-table: and there was now every year, an additional reason for deplored that he should ever have gone round by Toulouse.

To Philip, whom the routine of his life at Eden Castle was subduing into the utmost indolence of ease, it was a great annoyance to be forced to visit the metropolis, for consultations with Coutts and his lawyers, concerning the expedients to be adopted for the clearance of the Askham estates: and though his brother-in-law Lord Middlemore, (the fair Amazon of Mansfield Street being now the merry-hearted mistress of Hurstwood Castle, its groom-like lord, and princely estate!) assured him "it was a monstrous lucky thing for him to be be forced out of his den now and then to rub off the rust,"—he could have well dispensed with the friction.

Great therefore was his vexation on receiving an intimation from his brother, on the death of Lord Hardynge, '(the announcement of whose

danger, insignificant as he had been formerly esteemed at Eden Castle, was of sufficient moment to be copied by the continental journals from the English papers,) of his desire that Philip should assume the representation of the family borough. The removal of the present member to the Upper House afforded the long-desired opening; and the restrictions of the founder of the estate necessitating only a residence of six months in the year at Eden Castle, Lord Askham considered it his brother's duty to devote the remaining six to the interests of his family and the nation.

Such were the causes which, in the spring of 1811, compelled the recluse of Eden Castle to reinvoke himself in the vortex of London life; —at first, against his will;—for his mourning being only recently laid aside, he fancied that decorum required him to abstain from the pleasures that compensate such exertions.

But before he had been leading a single month the joyous life of the clubs and busy life of a member of parliament, the reiterated assurances of his friends convinced him that

his existence was but now beginning ;—and that his previous mischances in life were the result of a false start.

Had his despondency been ever so genuine, no one would have listened to “ Askham’s Night Thoughts !”—No one has leisure for grumblers. In the great hurricane of the world, people have enough to do to protect their own comfort and safety. A man is too busy in grappling himself for safety to a tree, or at least in holding on his hat, to have leisure for binding up imaginary wounds. Even misanthropy is less offensive than hypochondriasm : the misanthropist making no claim on public sympathy. For in this age of undisguised self-worship, no one chooses to bore himself with the boredom of the bored.

On finding there was no occasion for his chalice of tears, Philip took to champagne, as a beverage in which he could find friends to pledge him ;—and on hearing that Lady Grandison pronounced him handsomer than ever, he even grew fastidious with his tailor and capricious with Hoby. Before the sea-

son was over, he had progressed into a popular dining-out man.

It was a pleasant time for popular diners-out. The closing of the continent compressed within the high-pressure boiler of London life, those varied powers which now go vapouring forth from Indus to the Pole ; vivid spirits that float on the surface of Paris, Rome, Naples, Vienna, —skimming the Mediterranean in their yachts or steaming across the Atlantic or Red Sea.— Isolated within itself, English society was more original—more genuine—and consequently far more amusing. Tom Errand is a better fellow in his own clothes, than when bedizened in the jubilee suit of Beau Clincher; and we were as much better beasts in our brutehood of unsophisticated Bullism, than when simulating, with clumsy affectation, the adroit affectations of Paris, as there is more raciness in a rough old English farce in which the actors are well up in their parts, than in half-a-dozen ill-digested, ill-adjusted vaudevilles, “ taken from the French.”

Even our absurdities, when indigenous, be-

come us better than those of exotic growth. The dandy set, which was soon blown and carried off on the wings of the wind, like a dandelion run to seed, was amusing enough when it first took out its patent of impertinence. At all events, it was diverting to watch the open-mouthed wonder with which *la cantonnade* surveyed the well-starched majesty of those who, by virtue of a better cut coat, felt privileged to snub the Regent!—The idiotism of the crowd that once collected to stare at the lion over Northumberland House, because some varlet asserted he had seen its tail wag, was bright by comparison with the besotment of those numskulls of quality, who invited the son of Lord North's butler into their houses only to insult them; and who, though a church-rate-paying and liturgy-rehearsing generation, were never weary of parroting the bon-mots of another of the set, who, witty as the father of evil, was as little scrupulous in his parts of speech.

At Grandison House, Philip found the new power in full possession of the fortress.—The

colours of dandyism, emblazoned with a tailor's goose proper on a field of tin, with a cap and bells for crest, were flying on the walls. No means of compromise with such an enemy. If of sufficient note to deserve its notice, you must become tributary, or antagonist ;—and few were the men and none the women, who as yet found courage to accept the belligerent alternative.

The alliance of Philip, however, was eagerly courted by the dandies. He had glided at once into a definite place in London life.—For a man who at twenty-one, is a member of White's, becomes at one-and-thirty a member of what he pleases ;—nor had the golden opinions won during his earlier career, been frittered away into small change in a less prosperous position.—Having never appeared in London, humdrummed by the trammels of domestic life, he had a right to perch at once on one of the top-most rounds of the ladder of fashion.

The doors of Grandison House,—of the Lynchmores, Uppingshams, Norcliffes, and others of equally high account, were open to

him as if his own ; and when undisposed for the noisier pleasures of society, there was Eske Hill ; where the new Lord and Lady Hardynge, though mourning in all sincerity the loss of one the best of fathers and ablest of men, were overjoyed to welcome him to their fireside.

But the impulse that threw him most irresistibly into society, originated in the House of Commons. — No man who devotes himself actively to a parliamentary career, can preserve a spirit of unsociability. A public school-boy might as well pretend to play the hermit !—If a heart-and-soul politician, party interests extend his sympathies into a thousand social ramifications : or if, as was the case with Philip, a lukewarm partizan, representing in parliament the dignity of the house of Askham rather than the interests of a district,—he falls insensibly into the gossip and saunter of the House, —as half the Melton sportsmen prefer the covert-side to the run. Like them, Philip at present belonged to the coffee-room. But no matter to what we belong, so that it attach us by one or other of the filaments so essential to

the organization of civilized life, to a considerable tribe of our fellow-creatures.

By two individuals in the metropolis, however, the new-comer was regarded as a stumbling-block. His brother Henry was not a little vexed to find an older and more important Askham than himself, facing him from the opposition benches, to discern that the speeches which read so plausibly among the country gentlemen had the effect of emptying the House of its choice spirits, so as often to render his oratory "*vox clamantis in deserto;*" and though maintaining towards Philip demonstrations of regard calculated to a hair's-breadth by the conscientious civilities of the Marquis of Uppingham, he secretly wished that—

Edenbourne had fast bound him  
With the Eden nine times round him,  
safe in the halls of his ancestors.

The other malcontent was Helen Middlemore. With perseverance worthy a better cause, she still adhered to her designs on Lord Askham's heir-presumptive; and, no longer

relian upon the charms of “a face whose red and white, Nature’s own sweet and cunning hand” might have “laid on,”—but had certainly laid on in the wrong place, she had made up her mind to disguise her faded cheeks and blooming nose under an impervious veil of domestic virtues. If no longer gifted to tempt him into making her a wife, she might tempt him into making her a mother-in-law!—

On finding, therefore, that Philip studied his own convenience by leaving Selina and her little charge in the country, under the care of the excellent governess and nurse so much better qualified than herself to watch over their well-being, she was inexpressibly mortified. The picturesque tenderness she had prepared herself to exhibit, and the knowledge she had crammed from her mother’s Underwood concerning the treatment of weakly children, were completely thrown away.

And since Philip was inaccessible through his nursery department, she had little hope of distancing the varied rivalships of the ball-room. For wherever he went, she saw his at-

tentions an object of competition.—That he was one of the most distinguished-looking men of the day, was undeniably.—Lady Emilia de Lacy preferred conversing with him to dancing with the gayest of her partners ; and the young Duchess of Norcliffe, who wanted nothing but animation to be a perfect beauty, was pronounced to acquire the one charm wanting, only when on the arm of Philip. Single and double, old and young, were unanimous in his favour. The world took him on his seeming. The Mr. Askham of White's and Brookes's, was as little the Philip of Eden Castle, as the Henry of Boodle's; and the superannuated young lady began to perceive that, the children having failed as auxiliaries, she might as well draw off her forces, and sound a retreat.—

“ What wild-goose chase had Helen in view, that she should bore us into coming here, only to chaperon her ?”—whispered Lord Middlemore to his pretty bride, one night at Grandison House, where, thanks to a debate in the Lords on Catholic Emancipation, the party was unusually thin.

"Perhaps to see some person who is absent," replied Susan, good-humouredly.—"Poor thing, it is a pity she should be disappointed!"

"A much greater pity that she should drag horses out of their comfortable stable, and people out of their comfortable home, only to help her in raking the moon out of the water!" —cried Middlemore,—(giving due precedence to the quadrupeds.) "Helen ought to see that it is time for her to take to Infant schools and Political economy.—She must try the goody line.—The trade of a ball-going beauty don't pay!"

To punish him for speaking so unkindly and coarsely of his sister, his young wife quietly inflicted a pinch on the arm on which she was leaning, which he had some difficulty in enduring with the composure of countenance indispensable to circles polite.—

"If not for the sake of your sister," said she, regardless of his writhing, "you owe it to Lord Grandison to come here to night, when so many of her friends are better engaged at the House."

"Who cares to oblige a woman, by whom

no living soul was ever obliged?"—persisted her husband, somewhat in awe of a second infliction.—

"I beg your pardon: she has often obliged *me!*?" retorted Lady Middlemore. "The season before last, you would have spent evening after evening in Mansfield Street, entangling my silks and tossing over my work-box, had it not been for occasional visits to this house.—But surely the beautiful woman yonder on the ottoman, beside the Duchess of Sandbeck, to whom Sir Walter Lesly and Mr. Petrel are talking so earnestly, must be Lady Grandison's married daughter?"

"Lady Anastasia, by George!" cried Middlemore."—"What a time since she was in town!—At all events, nobody can say that De Bayhurst shuts her up in the country to ill use her; for she is looking like an angel!"

"I never saw her before, except on her wedding-day, when she looked like a ghost," observed Lady Middlemore.—"I had no idea she was so lovely."

"Nor I,—nor any one else.—She is amazing—

ly improved. She has quite lost her insignificant missish look.—Who will dare to call her dear Stasy now?"

"I dare say no one ever *did*,—except yourself and her mother."—

"Lord bless you,—there is no saying what Philip did not call her!—They were over head and ears in love with each other!"—

"Philip was never in love with any one but poor Evelyn!"—remonstrated Lady Middlemore. "The attention he may have shown Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst arose from her family connexion with the Savilles."—

"If you were not my wife," rejoined Middlemore good-humouredly,—"I would take the trouble of setting you right. But it is enough for one of the family to be better informed.—Come and be introduced to Lady Anastasia."—

"In her mother's house, I would rather wait till she asks for the introduction."

Unrestrained however by delicacies of any kind, Lord Middlemore was not in the habit of waiting; and as, next to making his old flame, Lady, Anastasia, acquainted with his

wife, he wanted to know what had at last brought her to town, he did not scruple to interrupt her conversation with the Duchess of Sandbeck, expressly to inquire.—

“ Do you know we were half afraid we should never see the inside of that famous house of yours in Grosvenor Square !” said he. “ Now that the windows have been shuttered up a couple of seasons, people are beginning to call it *Paradise Lost*. I had almost a mind to write to Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, when I was looking out for a house at my marriage, and ask him if he was inclined to let or sell.”

“ I trust Lady Middlemore found a house equally to her satisfaction in some other quarter ?”—replied Lady Anastasia courteously, but evading with a deep blush the question of her own absence from town.

“ Why, yes,—we took Helmingfield’s, which was a much better thing for us ;—treble coach-house, and ten-stall stable,—everything we could want !” replied Lord Middlemore, who, as his wife liked all that *he* liked, thought himself privileged to answer for her.—“ But

how is it that De Bayhurst keeps you so confoundedly mewed up in the country?—I shall call him over the coals for it the first time we meet.”

“ If you wish to quarrel with either of us on the subject, let it be *me*,” said Lady Anastasia,—unwilling to hazard the tomahawking which a man like Middlemore was likely to inflict upon her husband. “ It is all *my* doing. I am grown quite a Lady Bountiful; and we are passing through town only to take our boy to Eton.”

“ *Your* boy?” interrupted Lord Middlemore, with a crowing laugh.—“ Come, that’s too much of a good thing!—Remember we were all single in this room, three years ago! —Ay, to be sure!”—cried he, with sudden recollection, “ I remember, now, hearing that you’d cleared Philip Askham’s hands of his wife’s son. And so the youngster is going to Eton already, is he?—Quite right.—I hope *I* shall have nothing but girls,—(not choosing to have the reins taken out of my hands so long as I am able to drive!) But if I do, by

George, they shall all go to Eton as soon as they're breeched!—Eton is the only place where a fellow learns anything worth speaking of!—All the time I was in the upper school, I used to allow Bill Harris a guinea a week, to let me drive the Datchet coach on half-holidays. And I never was worth my salt, till I had it pitched into me by Horace Trevor, in a stand-up fight in the playing-fields, which, by-the-way, was the first thing that determined me to put myself into training. And only ask Cribb what he thinks of me *now!*"—

During this neat and appropriate address, the Duchess of Sandbeck sat contemplating her niece with inexpressible admiration. As Anastasia Grandison, she would have noted with a childish giggle Lord Middlemore's self-exposure. But now, after listening with patient serenity, she hastened to cover the embarrassment likely to be experienced by his wife, by well-bred inquiries after Lord and Lady Hardynge.—“She had heard with regret of their loss.—She knew the grief it would occasion them.—Her nearest and kindest country neigh-

bours, the Scotneys, were nearly related to the dowager Lady Hardynge, and from *them* she had heard with great interest of the affliction of the family at Eske Hill."

The Duchess, a woman of the *vieille roche*, who appreciated good breeding as first among the minor morals of society, was puzzled to know how the young girl who, in the highest circles of the court had never got rid of the flippant levity of a spoiled child, should have acquired in the seclusion of a country life her present feminine composure. Nor was Petrel, who had been confiding to Sir Walter Lesly his admiration of the altered tone of her conversation, less completely amazed.

"I never suspected a Roger Ascham in De Bayhurst," said he,—“yet he seems to be the most efficient of tutors!—We are apt to fancy a planet brighter after an eclipse. But this Sussex star has progressed from the fifth to the first magnitude.”

The verdict of Petrel, whether on the death of a gnat or the crumbling of a dynasty, was sure to obtain circulation; and the moment his

opinion transpired that the former belle of Grandison House was converted into a *bel esprit*, people prepared themselves to be enchanted by every syllable that fell from her lips. She was soon followed to be listened to, as formerly to be looked at.

But if the decree of Petrel secured admiration, the manner in which she was treated by the austere Duchess of Sandbeck, insured respect. The place now conceded to her, was totally different from the one she had formerly occupied. Not the smallest analogy between the fantastical sylph of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the beautiful young woman who received with such unassuming dignity the compliments of her mother's guests.

The only person insensible to the change, was Lady Grandison.—Even the Earl, so unobservant of anything that occurred without the pale of the stable yard, had patted Anastasia on the back, almost as approvingly as if the blood and beauty she displayed could be placed in competition with that of his high-mettled racers, and turned to account in his

book. But her mother was so blinded, deafened, and besotted by the narcotic poison of politics, that there was not so much as an open pore where natural affection could creep in !

“ The Regent,”—“ the regency,”—“ the restrictions,”—had entire possession of her giddy brain and worldly heart.

Though the abler heads of the Whig party were now convinced that the attainment of perfect freedom of action would not suffice to detach his Royal Highness from the administration with which circumstances had forced him into alliance, and which was connected by so many links with the victorious general in whose charge the British banner had become triumphant in the Peninsula, this flimsy Cleopatra of May Fair relied so foolhardily on her own powers, as to fancy that her intimacy with the Duke of York, whose Toryism was, if not as hard as iron, as tough as leather, would prevail over *him*; and *through* him, over one who was as fast bound as the best of cooks and cuisines could bind him, in the chains of Hertford House !

Such was her object ;—such was her day-dream ;—and involved in these stilted ambitions, it was beneath her dignity to inquire whether dear Stasy had neglected her former canary-bird pursuits of fancy-work and warbling, for graver and holier studies.—On finding the Scotneys of Holmehurst mentioned in her daughter's letters, (soon after Mrs. Askham's death,) as valuable neighbours, she observed in reply, that “Lady Anastasia was quite right to *notice* them; for it was always proper to keep up in a country neighbourhood the respectability of the clergy.” It did not occur to her that the obligations, in such a friendship, *could* be on the side of Bayhurst Hall !—

“A charming note from the Prince Regent, my dear,” said she, in an audible whisper, placing a letter in her daughter's hand ere her conversation with the Middlemores was at an end. “Impossible to come here to-night; but he intreats that you will repair his loss by accompanying me to-morrow to the fête at Carlton House. You are in favour, I can assure you.—Two thousand invitations already

out!—Lord Rigmarole, though a lord of the treasury, dared not ask for one for his wife.”

“ *Nihil tam firmam est, cui periculum non sit etiam ab invalido!*” muttered Petrel aside to Sir Walter Lesly. “ Lord Rigmarole is a great example; but the Regent is a greater prince. Had I a wife so pretty as Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst, I would not seek invitations for her to Carlton House!”—

## CHAPTER II.

Je retrouvais là cette fatalité de l'ordre social, qui me poursuivait partout.—DUCHESSE DE DURAS.

So long as I was possessed by the evil spirit of worldliness, vile as I was, I persisted in maintaining the semblance of decency and honour.—CONFessions OF ST. AUGUSTIN.

Dieser Setze ihm goldene Datteln, goldene Feigen, goldene Fischchen, und goldenes Brod vor.

“ Esset ihr das Gold hier? fragte Alexander.”—MENDEL-SOHN.

THE first word that greeted the ear of Philip on the morrow at his club, was the name of Anastasia!—Wellington, Massena, Beresford, Badajoz, and the Guadiana,—Grey, Grenville, Whitbread, Grattan, Duigenan, and the Catholic Question,—words of moment, which had constituted the murmur of its surges the preceding day, were now overpowered by that of

De Bayhurst ! Some spoke of the husband,—some of the wife ;—the married men deciding that Sir Hugh was quite justified in securing so rich a treasure in the country ;—the single, that the place for such treasures, is in town !

It was the midsummer meridian of the year, when the lilies of the field and the follies of London are in their brightest bloom, so as to render either attractive.—At such a moment, the world of fashion acquires from its activity of movement, a sort of consistency ; as froth may be rendered solid by sufficient whipping. That auspicious 20th of June was a day singled out of a thousand, and marked with diamond cross, as one of triumph to the levity-lovers; for, on the plea that the suppression of the Birthdays must be fatal to the interests of trade, the patriotic Prince had issued invitations for an entertainment, more magnificent than any given in Europe since the gorgeous fêtes of Versailles, whose golden waste proved the means of sapping the foundations of the ancient monarchy of France.

Announced by government papers and loyal

partizans as a generous concession to the interests of the counter, the Regent's fête was in fact a popularity-trap for all sorts and conditions of men;—a coalition-bait,—an anodyne for the *frondeurs* of Brookes's and a stimulant to the painstaking Tories, who were already exalting upon their shoulders the Prince whom they had so often denounced as a son of perdition. With tears in his eyes, Lord Eldon was prepared to certify of the fourth George as of the fifth Harry, that though, in his green and sallad days,

—his addiction was to courses vain,—  
His companies unlawful, rude, and shallow,—  
His hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports,—  
consideration had

—like an angel come,  
And whipped the offending Adam out of him,  
Leaving his body as a paradise  
To envelop and contain celestial spirits;—

which celestial spirits, Horace Trevor loudly protested to be Garus and Curaçoa!—At all events, the “riots, banquets, sports,” had taken the form of right-royal hospitality; and the

Montespan of the new reign, to whom half a century's experience of men and things might be supposed to impart some tact of judgment, announced that a full-fledged, or rather full-wigged phoenix was arising from the long-moulder-  
ing ashes of Louis XIV. !

Tory tenets, meanwhile, were decidedly in the ascendant.—For a prince who celebrated his accession to power, based on the severest family calamity that visits mortal nature, by the sound of sackbut, lute, harp, and psaltery, and mirth and feasting, could not fail to attach himself to the party that advocated not only a standing army, but standing war,—and eternal (psha!—we would say) *capital* punishments; under whose auspices, gunpowder and hemp were looking up, and Lord Ellenborough, Newgate, and Surgeons' Hall rubbing their hands. But then, the church was secure!—Tithes were *also* looking up; and the disappointed Catholics driven back weeping into their oratories, to pray for a more tolerant dispensation.

It is true that the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, were striking their iron roots into the

earth, to produce armed men at no remote epoch. But their germination was at present concealed under the enamelled surface of a society, whose golden gloss reflected like a mirror, the glowing beams of the rising sun. At the gates of Carlton House, the guard of honour of the dandies was drawn out in their new uniforms, embroidered on every seam ; and even the *bitter* half of St. James's Street,—the independents of Whites,—swore once more (like Lord Middlemore) “ by GEORGE !”—The initials of G. P. R., which, though shortly destined to shine forth in all the coloured fires and glittering sparks of the pyrotechnists, were still unfamiliar to the public eye, became the ambition of every well-bred button,—and even of the souls that should have been above them.

The fashionable world, *en attendant*, had taken it into its empty head that mighty auguries were to be deduced from the aspect of the inaugurate fêté, and Philip Askham, like the rest, prepared himself to draw the horoscope of the country from the conjunction of

planets now in the ascendant at Carlton House.

But, alas ! like the astrologer in the fable, while speculating on the stars so high above his head, he ran great risk of tumbling into a well ! The first object that greeted his eyes at the fête was *her* whose name had been the first word to greet his ears that morning.—Lady Anastasia, in the full effulgence of her beauty,—radiant with diamonds,—beaming with smiles,—fair as daylight,—sweet as summer,—entered the ball-room, leaning on the arm of her dark-haired, dark-eyed mother,

Led by her dusky guide like Morning led by Night.

Since his marriage, or her own, no communication had taken place between them.—Nearly four years had elapsed, since they heard the sound of each other's voices, (though memory still preserved the echo in their hearts!)—four years,—which had converted the pretty, flirting girl, into a thinking, feeling woman,—perfecting at once the expansion of her mind and development of her luxuriant beauty.

By general acclamation, Lady Anastasia was

pronounced the loveliest of the lovely, at that memorable fête!—But if thus distinguished by persons who admired only her sweetness of countenance, her grace of gesture, her well-rounded symmetry of form, what was she to *him* with whom she was associated by so many personal reminiscences,—so many fond regrets? Little as Philip Askham suspected the blight he had inflicted on her innocent youth, he knew that she had loved him,—loved him, hopelessly and unencouraged;—and never had the sense of his selfish ingratitude so startled his conscience —no, not even beside the coffin of his lost Evelyn,—as while fixing his wistful gaze on that beautiful woman,—an object of adoration to the assembled dignitaries of the land!

Approach her, he dared not.—He mistrusted his own feelings, and he mistrusted *hers*;—mistrusted them, however, on no very positive grounds; for *one* moment, he fancied that reminiscences of other times would bring tears into those radiant eyes, so as to commit them both; and the next, dreaded lest resentment should arm her queenly brow with indignation, and

reduce him in the eyes of others into the pitiful creature he already was in her own.

“What a deuce of a crowd!”—said Lord Middlemore, abruptly terminating his meditations, as he advanced through the brilliant vestibule into the statue-gallery terminating the state apartments.—“Two thousand invitations issued, and no excuses; except the Hardynges (who did not choose to appear as a couple of black swans,) and Lord Holland, who is said to have written word that he was engaged to St. Anne’s Hill.”

A whisper from his wife, begging him to moderate his voice and increase his discretion, induced him to propose transferring her to the hands of her brother.

“I wish to mercy, Phil, you’d take care of Susy for ten minutes or so!” cried he.—“She has turned restive, at the sight of the crowd; and I’m wild to get a sight of the Gothic conservatory and illuminated arches leading to the temporary rooms, which they say are dazzling. The French princes have been calling for smelling salts,—the whole thing reminded them so confoundedly of Versailles!”

“Like the spectre in the Walpurgis Nacht,” said Philip, addressing his sister, “the fête seems to exhibit to every one the object of his love; for the Russian ambassador assured me just now that he fancied himself at Ispahan! These magnificent tropical plants, borrowed from the royal gardens at Kew, certainly support the illusion; and near the conservatory, there is a vista of towering palm trees with the interstices filled up with masses of roses, which is really enchanting!—Byron’s friend Hafiz, will certainly favour us with an ode to-morrow, in the Morning Post.”

“Won’t *that* account tempt you, Susy?”—said Lord Middlemore to his wife,—who was now on her brother’s arm. But she had already conditioned with Philip to conduct her to the ball-room; where, being in a situation to require rest, she proposed to fix herself with Lady Uppingham, under whose chaperonage their younger sister, Sophia, was making her *début*.

Willingly, however, would Philip have persuaded her to content herself where she was. The Uppingshams were now so paramount in royal

favour and so high in ministerial dignity, that it was scarcely possible to join them without intruding into a privileged sphere ; and his tenacious pride was on its guard against the charge of aspiring to share their Tory honours, or poaching on the manor of his brother Henry, of which the young member was a strict preserver.

Having progressed, however, into a “*distinguished member*,” Henry Askham had little to fear from competition !—He had now only to name the decimal to his cipher.—He was no longer adjective, but substantive. The transition of dear Stasy into a highbred woman, was not half so marvellous among the miracles of time, as the solidification of the superficial aspirant into a steady official man ; sure-footed as a mill-horse, strengthened in fibre by saturation in the brine of Treasury pickle, and as surely grooved into the slide of preferment, as one-sided polities and many-sided servility could make him !

In spite of Philip’s reluctance, Lady Middlemore was soon seated with her sisters in the

ball-room, as near as might be to the focus of Majesty ; and thus shone upon by its lustre, the brilliant little group amply accredited the proverbial beauty of the family.

“ You may certainly boast of having the handsomest sisters in London. I regret that one of them should be absent ! ” was the flattering compliment of the Regent to his old acquaintance, on Lady Middlemore’s entrance ; a decree that instantaneously effaced from fashionable memory the impertinence of Horace Trevor, who had previously nicknamed the four sisters, “ Askham’s Cardinal Virtues.”

On perceiving from a distance how graciously Philip was addressed by their royal host, Lady Lynchmore, as he was quitting the ball-room, contrived to fasten Lady Emilia on his arm ; a sad reminder that he had arrived at a time of life when a man unguarded by the insurance-plate of an avowed *liaison* nailed on his bosom, must hold himself at the disposal of those who have no privileged *patito* of their own.

To resent being appropriated to so pretty and pleasant a companion as Lady Emilia, however,

was out of the question ; and though annoyed at being selected to take charge of her only as a *safe man*—a flyflap to keep off the noisome swarm of guardsmen and younger brothers, with whom it was sentence of death for her to dance,—he accomplished her mother's object of causing her to be seen, and her own, of seeing the varied and brilliant details of that feast of roses ;—the overarching bowers of exotics, gleaming with subdued light, while sparkling devices of coloured lamps glittered as in mockery beyond ;—corridors festooned with flowers, exhaling ineffable fragrance ;—a wilderness of gorgeous uniforms, radiant with the badges of chivalry ;—diamonds, as if gathered in masses from the valley of Sinbad ;—fair faces, assembled as by an enchanter's wand ; while strains of choicest music, each answering each from saloon to hall, completed the magic of the scene.

In the midst of these enchantments, he was accidentally forced into collision with Lady Anastasia ! A sudden summons to supper having impelled the brilliant throng streaming

along the crowded walks of the garden, into the marques set forth for the banquet, and Lady Grandison having, as usual, manœuvred herself into a place at the table reserved for the royal family, foreign princes, ambassadors, and cabinet ministers, her daughter, on the arm of the Duke of Norcliffe, was conducted into the very tent whither Philip was leading Lady Emilia!—Unprivileged to share the honours of the royal table, with its glitter of gold plate, great men, and little fishes, De Bayhurst's wife had the ill-fortune not only to be placed beside the only man present she desired to avoid, but under circumstances to render her thankful for his protection in the crowd.

With better judgment than might have been expected from his perturbation, Philip offered *only* his protection. So little, indeed, did he intrude on her notice, that it was solely from the answers he heard her address during supper to the Duke of Norcliffe, that he ascertained her to be alone in town. When his Grace, with solemn pleasantry, accused Sir Hugh of timing his visit to Eton so as to avoid the

*corvée* of comparison between the uniform of his Yeomanry corps and that of the Tenth, his fair companion was not at the trouble of denial.

The halting gallantries of the scientific Duke were, however, fully compensated by the devoted attentions of Horace Trevor, who had possessed himself of the vacant place on the other side; and Philip had not only the annoyance, throughout supper, of inferring from the blushes of Lady Anastasia the extreme directness of his compliments, but of finding exposed to *her* observation the affectionate familiarities of Lady Emilia; who, regarding him only as the father of her dear Lina, treated him almost as unceremoniously as she would have done her own. Aware that rumour had long coupled their names in his own county, he could easily interpret the smile with which their intimacy was pointed out by Trevor to the attention of his companion.

And thus, the pleasure of commanding a view of the most beautiful object in the room, was completely invalidated for Philip; and it was positive relief when the finest banquet at

that time ever given in England, wore to an end. So thoroughly, indeed, was he discomfited by the untoward circumstances attending his encounter with Lady Anastasia, that, after reconsigning his young friend to her chaperon, he determined to have his carriage called for immediate departure.

But in a crowd such as that which surrounded him, *who* may pretend to be his own master ! As he crossed the statue-gallery, the royal tent was pouring forth its distinguished guests ; entangled among whom, Askham suddenly found his button in the hand of the Duke of Sandbeck,—a bore of such surpassing magnitude, that his device ought to have been an ivy plant,—not with its usual motto of “*Je meurs où je m’attache,*” but “*Où je m’attache, je fais mourir.*”

Thanks to his Garter and seat in the cabinet, however, the most ponderous of peers had been sharing with his sister, Lady Grandison, the honors of a spot where everything pretended to be light, from the trifles on the table, to the characters of the triflers surrounding it ; and,

having nothing to say about the gold fishes and donkey-and-pannier saltcellars, but what had been said by his neighbours, his Grace rendered *his* version original by the air of profound mystery with which he whispered it into the inmost ear of his companion, as though a high treason secret of the P. C.! The standers-by had, accordingly, reason to surmise that some heinous breach of etiquette or unpleasant disaster had marred the harmony of the royal supper table;—that the little fishes, like those in the Arabian tales, had taken to talking;—or the great men, (an omen equally portentous,) to being silent!

By the time Askham was able to extricate the cut-steel button, (which his valet pointed out next morning as fatally rusted by the contact,) his deference towards a brother of Lady Grandison and an uncle of Lady Grandison's daughter had led him insensibly round into the ball-room; where, among his sisters, as if one of the family group, sat Lady Anastasia, towards whom the Duke of Sandbeck instantly directed the steps of both.

Philip had, however, nothing to regret in the movement. The graciousness with which he was welcomed, reconciled him to her and to himself.

Lady Anastasia appeared to have forgotten that she had anything to resent!—In the course of the last two years, her mind and feelings having acquired the serenity derived from a well-spent life, she had learned to regard Mr. Askham only with the compassion due to the survivor of one of the most amiable of women.—From the Scotneys, she had gleaned enough concerning Evelyn's early sorrows and exemplary conduct, to know how thoroughly she deserved to be lamented.

Of her own destiny, the evils were irretrievable! But, like a wise man shipwrecked on a desolate shore, she had set about remedying the miseries of her condition, and saving all she could from the wreck. Though an object of aversion to her husband, though no longer even desirous to obtain his affections, she was determined to command his respect. If even that were unattainable, it was something to enjoy her own.

Unsuspected by herself, however, Lady Anastasia had conquered a larger space than his proud ferocity of nature permitted him to avow, in the regard of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst. To remove the stony barrier he had wantonly created between them, was now impossible. But while following up the line of conduct he had traced for himself, by surrounding her with the privileges and public deference so much her due, without exceeding the bounds of courteous but cold companionship established between them, he was deeply touched by the resignation with which she submitted to his tyrannical injustice. As if warned by her short London experience of the dangers to which she might be exposed by indulgence in vanities innocuous to happier women, she had at once and for ever cheerfully adopted the habits of a country life.

But the point on which she obtained the strongest influence over his feelings, was by her conduct towards the boy to whom he had rapidly attached himself with all the force of feelings elsewhere repulsed. Never was father

fonder than he of Edward Saville;—or rather of Edward de Bayhurst,—for he had obtained an extension of his privilege in favour of his heir. And so far from entertaining the smallest jealousy of this predilection, Anastasia, the embarrassment of whose position was considerably relieved by the interposition of any third person in her *ménage*, was almost as partial, and quite as indulgent, as himself. From the moment of Edward's arrival, indeed, the dreariness of Bayhurst had ceased. Youth and pastime came together; and the gates once thrown open to the neighbourhood, she had no difficulty in distinguishing the merit of the Scotneys of Holmehurst, and the advantage she might derive from their society.

Endowed with the highest qualities of head and heart, enjoying an honourable position in the county, and commanding, even from her husband, a degree of deference he was little in the habit of according, no obstacle could be opposed to the intimacy. Sir Hugh was grateful for the discretion which had governed their knowledge of his early conduct;—a knowledge,

however, which enabled them in some degree to interpret the depression of his young and lovely bride, and disposed them to receive half-way her overtures of friendship.

Thanks to the invaluable lessons acquired at Holmehurst, she now beheld in Philip Askham only the widower of Evelyn and brother of the agreeable and distinguished women among whom she was placed ; and her pleasantest moments at the royal fête, were derived from the conversation of that cheerful family group ; —conversation that Henry Askham would have coughed down as frivolous and vexatious, and Horace Trevor denounced as the hum of a hive of drones.

While Lady Grandison was fidgeting about the ball-room, putting forth the innumerable feelers that surround the person of an *intrigante*, which were now in perpetual motion in the hope of securing by the junction of her political and personal *liaisons* the Garter for her lord, (who cared about as much for it as for a surcingle !)—Lady Anastasia was completing, by

her charms of manner and conversation, the conquest her beauty had begun.

That night, the unquiet pillow of Philip was haunted neither by the dazzling splendour of the Regent's fête, nor the inferences to be deduced from it, touching the new court,—in which far-sighted persons foresaw the magnificence and ill example of that of Versailles. The face of Anastasia shone through his closed eyelids. The perplexing question of whether Lord Hardynge were deceived in supposing that attractive woman to have cherished towards him feelings of affection, distracted his mind ! Fortunately for *him*,—perhaps for both,—on the morrow Lady Anastasia was to resume the peaceful pursuits and self-created duties of her happy seclusion ; while *he* pursued in London the noisy tenour of his way as a chatty member of society, and silent member of parliament.

When he returned at the close of the session to Eden Castle, Selina, who felt almost as much embarrassed at the prospect of his arrival

as her poor mother when she had to account for the appearance of an uninvited Shetland pony in the park, was struck by the strange preoccupation of his manner.

He was not the same person who had quitted Edenbourne a few months before; and no longer the savage whose interdictions had provoked rebellion on the part of her brother, he took so little heed of the improvement of little Percy of which *she* was so proud, that, for the first time since her mother's death, that terrible denunciation recurred to her mind:—

“The poor child will be an object of affection to no one,—not even to his father!”

Silent,—absent,—disregardful,—she had great difficulty in finding an opening for the communication she felt it her duty to make that, during his absence, she had received the gift of a costly watch and chain from Sir Erasmus L'Estrange; who, for two years past, had been living at the lodge the life of an anchorit.

Though his sister and nieces proposed every

summer to become his inmates, he made his health a plea for excluding his family from his presence; and, with the exception of weekly visits to the church thrice-consecrated in his eyes as the resting-place of Evelyn, and daily ones to a beautiful private chapel he had caused to be erected in his grounds, the unhappy old man never left his chamber. Even when, profiting by Mr Askham's departure, he despatched to his little favourite the rich present conveying the assurance of his continued affection, he did not evince a desire to see her.—Perhaps because he thought it might incense her privileged protector;—perhaps lest his decrepitude should provoke in the fastidious eyes of girlhood, the disgusts which had rendered him insupportable to her mother.

But to Selina's great surprise, when the terrible secret was disclosed, (with almost as much tremour and irresolution as had accompanied the announcement of poor Elshie,) Mr. Askham listened with the same indifference as to the Primer-proficiency of his sickly boy! She saw that she might have accepted a diamond

necklace from Sir Erasmus without exciting his anger!—

But though as much pleased as surprised at being permitted to retain her treasure, she could not but dwell anxiously on the change manifest in her step-father. Did it arise from the anxious influence of parliament,—a mystery rendered lawful in the eyes of the school-room, by terror-striking reminiscences of the reigns of the Stuarts?—

No! the merry laugh of Hardynge assured her that the representation of Edenbourne was not so *very* stern a duty; and there was no accounting for the restlessness which caused him to spend hour after hour in rambling over hill and dale through the domain, with dog and gun for pretext, but no keeper in attendance to attest the reality of his sportsmanship; or when the winter came, to devote four days of the week to the hounds, however remote the meet, or unpropitious the weather.

It was a dreary winter for Selina! The Regency-crisis having re-engendered great acrimony of party feeling, Askham declined

the annual visit to Uppingham Manor which the kindly nature of the Marchioness (in whom she fancied she could trace a resemblance to her gentle mother,) always rendered so delightful. Nor had she even the resource of Hexham. With somewhat more than the lip-patriotism of his father, Lord Delvyn had exerted his influence with his parents in favour of his native country; and Lynchmore Castle was once more the seat of hospitality, and Hexham Hall of desolation.

Never, therefore, had Selina longed so earnestly for the return of spring;—for never before had she known the dreariness of winter. Her little charge was a sufferer during the winter months; and in her troubles, she missed the companionship of the De Lacs, and their brother. The revival of the fields and flowers, to cheer her daily walks, would be at least some compensation!

But was it a similar impulse that instigated the eagerness with which Philip Askham, also, watched the progress of the kalendar?—Was he too longing for the first violet?—Alas! the

letters of Edward to his sister had apprized him that the De Bayhursts intended to pass the season in town; where the society of the object who engrossed every thought of his mind, would become once more attainable!—Though never to be *his*, he might at least feast his eyes upon her face,—his ears upon her voice,—his soul upon the hope of exciting a warmer interest in her own!

With the view of effecting a more intimate communication between the families by means of the little Savilles, he resolved to remove his establishment to town; and the pretext assigned, of wishing to obtain masters for Selina, achieved of course for the considerate benefactor the reputation of being “the best of step-fathers.” The shrewd axiom of Rochefoucault, that “*nous faisons quelquefois le bien, pour pouvoir faire impunément le mal,*” had not opened the honest eyes of Edenbourne!

Eagerly as the little girl looked forward to the return of spring for the renewal of her country pleasures, she was far more delighted to visit that unknown great city, so much

vaunted by the De Lacy's, and so much nearer to Eton, which was to place her within reach of the kind sisters of "papa."—

The house in Brook Street adjoining that of the Dowager Lady Middlemore, (which Askham had engaged, as if in deference to his cousin Helen's suggestion of the advantage to his little boy of vicinity to the park, but in reality from its proximity to Grosvenor Square,) was soon cheered by visits from every member of the Askham family ;—who rejoiced the heart of the faithful Susan by exclamations of delight at the improvement of her nursling, and the beauty of Selina.

Though little more than thirteen, an instinctive grace of deportment already assigned to her tall slender figure almost the charm of womanhood; and Lady Lynchmore, who had long interdicted her merry lord from including Miss Saville in the practical jokes with which he was in the habit of "frighting from its propriety" his daughters' school-room, expressed an opinion to her son that Lina was growing too old to be tormented, like one of his sis-

ters, under the specious name of his “little wife.”

But when thus established as a family man, the hospitalities extended to a houseless hanger-on of the clubs, had of course to be returned by the Honourable Philip Askham, M.P., in the enjoyment of five thousand a-year and just such a house in Brook Street as insures the expenditure of ten. Lesly and Trevor were at the trouble of supplying him with an excellent cook.—With every intention of dining with him whenever they had no better engagement, it behoved them to provide for the interests of their digestion; and, after his first dinner party his establishment was quoted, even by Lord Sefton, as so super-excellent, that Helen Middlemore acquired rivals enough in her pretensions to his hand, to add another plait to her crow’s-feet!—

For Askham’s settlement in town was of course connected by the world, with matrimonial intentions.—He was just in the position, and at the age, to marry again. Handsome, popular, enjoying a good income, good name,

and good connexions, he had no right to remain a widower ; and Lady Émilie de Lacy was not the only one of the beauties of the day named as likely to preside over his new residence.—

“ Ware hawk, Phil, my boy !” cried Lord Middlemore, pointing to an angle of his mother’s balcony, which commanded a view of his drawing-room ; “ for, as Helen will be sure to play Romeo to your Juliet the first moonlight night, I have put my friend the watchman on his guard. The Charleys, hereabouts, know me of old ! When I lived with my mother, I used to make them spring their rattles for as many fires as, if real, would have made bankrupts of every insurance office in town !”—

By another brother-in-law, meanwhile, he was warned against dangers of a very different nature.—Lord Hardinge, profoundly discouraged by the realization of his father’s prophecies concerning the Regent’s desertion of his party on the cessation of the restrictions, regarded the overtures for a coalition, rebutted with so much dignity by Lords Grey and Grenville, as

an insult greater than injury. But he was not so sure of the steadiness of his successor in the representation of Edenbourne. He feared that Philip had embraced the cause of liberalism with the levity due to a mistress, not with the sacred affection due to a wife.—

Though reconciled to the loss of power and influence, which, in common with men wiser and more experienced than himself, he had fancied secured to the Whigs by the accession of the Prince whom in his adversity they had so warmly supported,—though comforted in his place on the opposition benches, like Galileo in his prison, by the certainty that, let his own position be what it might, the world was revolving—the good cause in progress,—(*e pur si muove!*) he could not but apprehend that Askham was likely to be picked up by the sails of the wind-mill at Grandison House, and carried round in his own despite.—

The foolish woman who, amid the wars of Europe and the tumults of the manufacturing districts,

ubique

Luctus, ubique pavor,—

heard nothing but her own *jabotage*, and saw only the perspective of a blue riband, was beginning to parley with the enemy; and he knew that, “*Château qui parle ou femme qui écoute, va se rendre.*”—Her carriage was seen many times in the week, within the gates of Hertford House; and those best skilled to interpret the course of the wind by straws thrown up as a test, announced that her jargon about “Lord Grandison’s long-standing friendship with the dear Duke of York,” (in honour of its turf origin, she might have called it a long *running* one!) and her “personal regard for the dear Prince Regent, which rendered it impossible for her to receive in her house those by whom their Royal Highnesses had been insulted,”—foretold decided ratification.

“For the love of decency, my dear Askham,” cried Lord Hardynge, as soon as he noticed the assiduity of his brother-in-law at Grandison House,—“don’t let that harpy à l’eau de rose get hold of you! If she failed in humbugging you into a son-in-law, don’t let her convert you into a catspaw!—All she wants

is a link with Lord Uppingham and Henry. Or perhaps, by ascertaining how many pieces of silver reward your defection, she may hope to learn what is bid for Lord Grandison's.—Poor apostate!—She will hang herself in that garter, after all!"

"There is nothing to fear on my account," replied Philip, coldly. "One accepts Lady Grandison as of a certain value in her own set, as in Africa the cowries that constitute its currency!"

"Which one flings into the sea, on attaining a civilized latitude!—She reminds *me* rather of the Automaton conjuror; the mechanism that governs which excites more curiosity than the tricks it performs. I can't help wondering what the deuce the Tories mean to do with her."

"Exactly what *we* are doing, probably; abuse her behind her back, after accepting her hospitalities."—

"*That* is done by each, to all. I mean what specific purpose they mean her to accomplish. Lord Uppingham, for instance, is a man who

carefully weighs his actions as he does his words, (and heavy enough he ought to find them !) And you must have noticed that for some time past, Lady Uppingham never misses a party at Grandison House."

" Because she finds them pleasanter now Lady Anastasia has returned to town. Nay, every one being of her opinion; they are now so much the best things going, that it would be unfair to Sophy, whom Margaret usually chaperons, to deprive her of the advantage."

" I am answered,—but not satisfied!" replied Hardynge; who felt convinced that some latent motive existed, though of what nature he knew not.

And so there did !

The Marchioness of Uppingham, with her quiet habits of observation, had noticed with regret the deep devotion of her brother to Lady Anastasia. She was unwilling to hazard a remark on the subject, even to her husband, lest report should be the means of substantiating the evil. But aware that, on every

Wednesday night at Grandison House, Philip enjoyed an opportunity from which his parliamentary duties debarred him on other occasions, of spending the evening by the side of his lovely friend, and, fully appreciating the influence in society of her own blameless conduct and Lord Uppingham's influential position, she resolved, by joining them, to impose a restraint on their intimacy as well as on the malicious observations of the world.

Satisfied that Lady Anastasia's conduct and intentions were pure as her own, she fancied, as it became a woman so passionless to fancy, that the mere restrictions of social form would prevent the attachment of Philip from becoming manifest to its object; and that, thus repressed, his prepossession would eventually pass away like other vapourish emanations from the heart or brain of a man of fashion.

Such was her praiseworthy reason for frequenting Grandison House. Such her motive for provoking the secret execrations of her brother by the tenacity with which she adhered to the enchanting woman, to whose side all were

anxious to adhere. The Marquis made no objection to her visits to the camp of the Philistines. Esteeming both himself and his party immeasurably above the reach of injury from the trifling associations of the *beau monde*, he held his white head as high as Mont Blanc.

"It is a great mistake, my dear Henry," said he, when remonstrated with by his pragmatical protégé,—"to maintain too pertinaciously that party antagonism which tends to render coalition difficult, and conversion impossible. It is a distinctive sign of the tyrant, to be always cuirassed and under arms. Let our wives and daughters, at least, enjoy exemption from the exacerbations of party strife."

"But if at Grandison House, my sisters should form connexions with those who are perpetually harassing, thwarting, and insulting us?" observed Henry, whose ears were excoriated by the ironical cheers and sarcastic dia-tribes of the opposition benches.

"You do them too much honour by allowing their pin's pricks to disconcert you!" replied Lord Uppingham. "You should regard them

with the imperturbability maintained by some lofty statue in a city highway, while applewomen are squabbling and curs yelping round its pedestal."

From which mode of rejecting his protest, Henry Askham inferred not only that the proxy of Lord Grandison was already at the disposal of ministers ; but that his noble patron knew his party to be seated in power by its recent re-establishment, beyond all danger of change or opposition.

## CHAPTER III.

Das Drakel.

In seinem Innern, das Lebendige,—  
Nicht todte Bücher, alte Ordnungen,  
Nicht modrigte Papiere, soll er fragen!—

SCHILLER.

To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, I would not care!—But to be Menelaus, I would conspire against destiny!

SHAKSPEARE.

LET such of our readers as we are instructing, bear in mind, and such of our readers as we are reminding, be pleased to remember that English society already afforded attestation in the blunting of its finer feelings, to the demoralizing influence of perpetual war.—At first, like a young maiden, it sickened at the sight of

blood. At first, its holiest interests were invested in the great struggle protected by our national prayers. But, by degrees, it sent forth its brave to die, without a pang ; and received the bulletin of their fate without a tear.

The court danced, sang, and diverted itself as joyfully as though the head of its aged monarch were not humbled in the dust, and a starving population busied in demolishing the power-looms that create so large a share of our commercial prosperity. A solitary event which just then startled the sympathies of the kingdom,—the death of its prime minister by the cowardly hand of an assassin,—created more sensation by trenching on the politer interests of society, than the miserable fact that our brave legions were feeding by hundreds and thousands the vultures of Catalonia. For THAT dispensation, enough that a fast-day, on which no one fasted, was set apart by the legislation!

But this was not all !—A society enrooted in soil so volcanic was bringing forth fruit as bitter as that of the Dead Sea. The circles which,

by exaggerating in their courtiership the domesticity of Frogmore, had become hum-*drum*,—were now, by their apehood of Carlton House, falling into a contrary extreme ; and *one* syllable of the epithet must be changed, to characterize the new era.—A resentful husband was becoming almost as ridiculous as in an old comedy, and the shame of Menelaus had progressed into an honourable condition.

“ Happy those whose wives were reared when the influence of King George and Queen Charlotte was supreme in the land !” exclaimed Lord Hardynge, in rendering honour due to the excellence of his charming wife and sisters-in-law. “ We all know that a wry-necked king rendered full-bottomed wigs universal ; and that during the last days of Louis XIV, no man cared to be a year younger than seventy-four. But to see grave prelates making their obeisance at Hertford House with as much reverence as formerly at Buckingham, teaches one that ‘the Divinity that doth hedge a King,’ or at all events a Prince Regent, is somewhat less than apostolical.”

The moment in which a King's mistress is openly recognized and, as was the case in the present instance, openly *courted*, strikes a deadly blow at the morality of the nation at large. In that circular saloon in Manchester Square, now brightened by the *entente cordiale* of the French embassy, where the Otaheitan war-cry is so pleasantly silenced by the still small voice of good breeding or the piquant accents of wit, *then* flourished a night-shade plant, that grew and grew, till it obscured the brilliant name of George the Fourth, insensibly inter-weaving its noxious berries among the laurels of his reign.

But for such a state of things, there had been less danger for the young and innocent Lady Anastasia! But the courtier world was as ostentatiously divesting itself of its panoply of virtue, as though it were the livery of disaffection. Ever in extremes, the hypocrisy heretofore so strait-laced, threw off the vertugadin to disguise under the flimsiest possible veil of decorum the aspect of “the reeling goddess with the zoneless waist;” and had the Regent been

pleased to persist in his fluvial decorations and to perpetuate the fish-pond of the royal supper-table, the morality of Carlton House would have been content to appear as a mermaid !

Disastrous, therefore, was the chance which re-established Sir Hugh de Bayhurst in Grosvenor Square at a moment when the code of the dandies gave the law to the lords of the land. —For the respect commanded by the conduct of his wife, and perhaps a compunctionous desire to obtain her forgiveness, had determined him to turn a deaf ear, for the future, to all jealous suggestions, all unworthy mistrusts. Lady Anastasia had entitled herself to his confidence ; and his confidence she should have.

Above all, to ascribe to Philip Askham undue admiration of his wife, would have been a wanton and gratuitous renewal of offence. For three years past, the correspondence between his nephew and niece had placed the habits of Eden Castle completely before him, till the persevering seclusion of the widower excited his respect and commiseration ; and the pertinacity with which he refrained from enter-

ing the doors of Grandison House, so far from originating in a disinclination to meet Philip Askham, arose solely from his contempt of the intriguing heartlessness of his mother-in-law.

As some atonement for the seclusion to which he had condemned the bridehood of Lady Anastasia, he installed her in Grosvenor Square with more than the magnificence originally projected ; and promoted to the utmost her participation in the gaieties of the season. A new equipage,—new jewels,—new furniture, awaited her arrival ; and though his alienated wife, conceiving them to be bestowed like the premium of a schoolmaster to a painstaking scholar, would have dispensed with acts of munificence that called forth no feelings of gratitude in return, the enthusiasm with which the liberality of her son-in-law was noted by Lady Grandison, reminded her that, if no gratification to her feelings, his magnificent gifts conveyed a public testimonial to her conduct. Under the peculiar circumstances of her fate, such an attestation had its value.

Next to his affection for his nephew, the desire to render her position brilliant and honour-

able seemed the predominant impulse of his life. But with little cause to judge favourably of his motives, she ascribed his concessions to personal vanity or family pride. Infirmity of health produced by incessant irritation of mind, afforded sufficient excuse for his own renunciation of society. But he was not the less desirous to extend their sphere of hospitality ; and his face brightened,—nay, his spirit brightened, when he saw her presiding over the festivities of his house.

Who now so envied as Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst ! The queen of the season, all London, with one exception, crowded to her door ; and even in that instance, the feud created by the disputed guardianship of the children, accounted to the world for the coldness between Eden Castle and Bayhurst Hall.

“ How deuced spoony of you, Phil, my boy, to go and quarrel with the De Bayursts for doing the kindest thing by you in the world, just as their house was becoming the pleasantest in town ! ” cried Lord Middlemore, one day, to his brother-in-law, as they were lounging together in Rotten Row. “ I don’t know how

they manage it, but by George, they do things better than they are done any where, except at Carlton House."

"Sir Hugh de Bayhurst has a princely fortune," was the cold rejoinder of Philip Askham.

"I rather think *his* rent-roll would sing small beside *mine*; and *my* stables cost me somewhere about six thousand a year. But I promise you I never turned out such a pair of steppers as those grays of Lady Anastasia's. They take the shine properly out of the Regent's famous bays; and by George, the coachman's as thorough-bred as the horses! Before we came up from Hurstwood, I had *my* old fellow fed on oil cake like a prize ox,—crammed for the hamercloth as you would a turkey for the spit;—and in spite of beef, pudding, and March ale four times a day, hang me if he's within a couple of stone of De Bayhurst's!—Only to look at *him* gives one the gout!"

"Whereas it gives one the jaundice to look at his master."

"Why yes!—he's getting as yellow as an old

guinea or a kite's foot. It would be an act of charity to bestow his recipe for a complexion on Argyll ; who, they say, gamboges as women rouge, to make himself look interesting !”

“ I cannot say that De Bayhurst's complexion makes *him* look interesting.”

“ Ay—ay !—you never forgave him for cutting you out with dear Stasy ; and since the quarrel about the children, I suppose you see even his yellow tinge, *en noir*. However, you'd a lucky miss of it with the lady ; for between ourselves, Horace Trevor is making desperate play in that quarter ; and Hertford House, you know, is bringing such things into fashion.”

The eyes of Philip Askham flashed fire. Over his words, he had luckily more command.

“ *Horace Trevor !*” was all he allowed himself to say, but with the most scornful accentuation.

“ You and I may think him a bore,” rejoined Lord Middlemore ; “ for he rides like a tailor ; and by George, to see him at tennis, is better fun than Liston. But among women, I promise you, he passes for an agreeable fellow.”

"*Among women*, perhaps. It strikes me that some distinction from so sweeping a clause is due to Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst."

"And why, pray?—Though handsome and clever, she is Lady Grandison's daughter after all; and *bon chien chasse de race*."

"Were *that* an infallible rule, *you* would be in the cabinet instead of the jockey club; and I, who do not know a pea from a bean, should preside over agricultural meetings."

"To be sure, one does not accuse Lady Anastasia of place-mongering, which might be equally hereditary," rejoined Middlemore. "And by the way, they say,—that is, *nobody* says,—(for such is *my* translation of *on dit*!) that if the Wellesley negociation had come off, and the Whigs been Moira-winked into a coalition, Lady Grandison was to have had a peerage for De Bayhurst as well as the Garter for the capital G!"

"By 'they,' and 'nobody,' I presume you mean Boodle's and Henry! I suspect we all make twice as much as it deserves of Lady Grandison's diplomacy. On seeing her carriage flying about from Apsley House to St. James's

Place, or from Park Lane to Camelford House, people fancy she has been fighting for the Catholics, or declaring war with America; when most likely, she is canvassing for tickets for the Installation!"

"For the sake of my rents, I hope she *won't* declare war against America!" cried Middlemore, laughing. "Between France, Ireland, and the Luddites, we've enough on our hands without crossing the Atlantic; and brother Jonathan is a confounded long shot;—I dare say we *shall* though! For yesterday at dinner, at Uppingham House, Henry preached in sixteen sections to prove that the primary object of the present administration, is peace;—just as one reads of Philanthropist Lenitive speechifying at a city meeting against the Slave-Trade, after screwing his tenants into the workhouse, and weighing out rations to his servants' hall!"

Though wild with indignation on first hearing Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst's name coupled with that of the dissolute Trevor, on second thoughts, Philip congratulated himself that the clubs should have set up such a target for their scandalous shafts. So long as the attentions of

the dandy were notorious, his own would escape observation.

For he was beginning to anticipate a time when his feud with De Bayhurst might be compromised, leaving to both parties the honours of war. The Hardinges and others of their mutual acquaintance, had long suggested that, for the sake of the children, a thousand scruples should be overlooked. Even Edward, who, in the independence of his present prosperity, had forgotten his grievances against his stepfather, expressed an earnest wish, in the solitary visit he had made to Eden Castle since the death of his mother, that “*by-gones might be by-gones.*”

Had Askham been acquainted indeed with the early history of his poor wife, the grave of Evelyn ought to have pleaded, trumpet-tongued, against such a reconciliation; or had he surmised his share in the wrongs of Lady Anastasia, prudence might have interdicted all attempt to obtain access to Grosvenor Square. As it was, he listened only to the voice of selfish inclination; and accident soon ratified his capitulation of conscience.

Among Selina's warmest friends, was the young *débutante*, Sophia Askham;—not alone from the qualities that endeared her to every one; but because, ten years before in her childhood, Mrs. Saville had begged her out of severe disgrace with Miss Harrison for some *escapade* prompted by Richard and Claude; and in moments of peculiar emotion, Sophia fancied she could discern the looks of the kind mother beaming from those of the child.

She was an excellent girl;—a trifle less pretty than her elder sisters;—which deficiency, though to herself no subject of affliction, was the cause of some annoyance.—The heart of Lady Askham which, if small by nature, had through life been annually contracting, was set upon mortifying her sister Middlemore by securing four first-rate matches for her daughters; while *her* solitary chick was toughening in fruitless endeavours to double her single blessedness; and it was too provoking that the advantage of Lady Uppingham's auspicious patronage should be thrown away on a girl who, with a brighter complexion, and an inch or two added to her

stature, might have accomplished the best match of them all.

But notwithstanding these maternal hankерings after strawberry leaves, Sophia derived from the society of her amiable elder sisters an antidote to the poison so often sprinkled by ambitious mothers on the threshold of a young girl's life; and she continued to enjoy balls for dancing sake, and parties for chatting,—regardless of the designs which had prevented Helen Middlemore from finding pleasure in them when young, or solace, now that youth was past.

Though four years older than Selina, as the member of the Askham family nearest to her in age, Sophia was the confidante of all her little hopes and fears; or rather, hopes and wishes,—for fears she had none,—unless that Edward might get into a scrape at Eton, or Percy overheat himself, when playing in the square;—and one day, Miss Askham ventured to confide to her sister, Lady Uppingham, the great desire experienced by her young friend, whose musical genius was one of many valuable derivations from her mother, to hear the miraculous night-

ingale of the day,—the far-famed Cata-lani.—

“ It would be so delightful a surprise if dear Margaret, instead of taking *her* as usual to the opera, would for once be so very kind as to give her place to Selina.”

At such a proposition, the Marchioness was both vexed and pleased; pleased with the good-nature of her sister; vexed with herself, for not having sooner suggested a gratification for the motherless girl which did not militate against her strict notions on the subject of young-lady immurement. Philip raised no objections.—Selina accepted, with smiles on her lips and tears in her eyes; and, after dining at Uppingham House, accompanied the Marchioness to her box.

As unpretending in deportment as became her high worldly position and *unworldly* superiority, Lady Uppingham was not one of those whose fussy entrance into public places, fixes every glance upon their box, that the vulgar may exclaim, “ How well Lady —— is looking to-night, and how beautifully dressed !”—or the fine, “ Whom has she with her ?”—She

came, unheard,—and remained, unseen ;—her attention undisturbed from the opera by curiosity to know whether the Duchess of Rutland, or Lady Charlemont, or Lady Ossulston were in good looks ; or whether Lady Lynchmore, who occupied an opposite box, wore a lace cap or a silver turban. It consequently excited little notice in the house that, opposite to her half-drawn curtain, the expressive face of Miss Askham was, “for that night only,” replaced by that of an angel !—

Being Tuesday, the audience was thin ; and important debates in both Houses securing Lady Uppingham from visitors, there was no drawback on the delight with which Selina gave herself up to the ecstasy produced by the first powerful combination of harmony in which her fine ear had ever luxuriated. A chorus—an orchestra—were new to *her*,—to whom the science of mind was familiar ; and so powerful was the influence on her senses of that novel excitement, and so speaking the expression of her countenance responsive to every note, that Lady Uppingham sat contemplating her inspired face, as she would have done that of St.

Cecilia.—Never had she seen beauty so super-human!—

But from a distance, other eyes were fixed upon that lovely face, with still deeper emotion. As if to confirm by an exception the rule of Shakspeare concerning love of music, Sir Hugh de Bayhurst was so infatuated a Philharmonic, as never to miss an opera. It was one of his few personal enjoyments.—Yet so slight was his interest in the sparkling world of fashion, whose pleasures, at least, sympathized with his own, that, during the intervals of performance he seldom quitted his place in the pit. If his listless eyes wandered, it was towards the box of Lady Anastasia, or his detested mother-in-law, of Lady Uppingham, or her sister Susan; and he was consequently among the first to perceive the new companion of the Marchioness.

Another moment, and pale as ashes, with the cold dew of dismay starting on his forehead, he staggered from his place; and but that the opposing wall of the lobby sustained him, would have fallen to the ground. Evelyn was before him,—the long-lost, unforgotten Evelyn,

—wearing the very looks she used to wear in Holmehurst Hanger; when, seated on the mossy bank with her sweet face upturned towards the old chesnut-trees with their embowering blossoms, she listened to the summer choir!— So startling was the impression of her presence, that the sudden contraction of his heart reduced him almost to insensibility.

Returning reason suggested of course that he had seen his brother's daughter; and, but for the impossibility of subduing his struggling emotions into the decorum indispensable to approach a woman so habitually composed as Lady Uppingham, he would have hastened to the box, seized between his own the hands of the lovely girl, and poured forth all the compunctions feelings of his heart. But the iron armour of social convention was between them. It was forbidden him to tell her how much he loved her, not as her father's child, but as her mother's image; and, after returning into the house, to gaze unobserved for a few minutes on the angelic face that recalled so vividly the sufferings and errors of the past, the unhappy

man hurried from the house, and went out and wept bitterly.

Meanwhile Miss Saville's appearance was exciting some sensation.

"Guess whom you have got opposite to you, mother!" cried Lord Delvyn, bursting into Lady Lynchmore's box with the impetuosity of a spoiled son. "Horace Trevor asked me, just now behind the scenes, if Lady Uppingham's virtues had been rewarded with the attendance of a guardian angel for protection; and though pretty sure that he only wanted to get rid of me, by piquing my curiosity, off I bolted into the house."—

"To look at Lady Uppingham?"—interrupted Emilia de Lacy."

"To see her companion; when behold, who should the guardian angel be, but my little wife!—Emilia and Harriet and Hester must contrive to get off before she comes out," continued he, addressing Lady Lynchmore,—whose glass was now directed towards Lady Uppingham's box,—"for I promise you Lina will take the shine out of them all!"

The verdict of the rattling young man was

soon confirmed, not only by his sister, but by the fashionable loungers who visited their box.— Even the fastidious Sir Walter Lesly admitted that he was unprepared to see the *rose pompon* of Eden Castle, expand into such perfect beauty; and again and again, the jealous mother was forced to remind them, that if a perfect beauty, she was still only a child.—

The impression thus accidentally produced on the feelings of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, was fated to lay the foundation of painful and penitential considerations. He reflected with wonder on the indifference into which he had suffered himself to fall towards the daughter of Evelyn. She had existed in his thoughts only as an instrument of vengeance. But she was too nearly connected with all that was dearest to him, to admit of perseverance in this voluntary abnegation. She was too like her mother,—too dear to Edward,—to be otherwise than precious to himself.

To see her again, and with more deliberate survey, was his first object; and though the following Saturday proved the justice of his surmise that the visit to the opera

was to be a solitary indulgence, he discovered without much difficulty that, every afternoon, when the park was crowded, the children from Brook Street accompanied the governess into Grosvenor Square ;—a *bel respiro* which, though hitherto disdained for the Mall, was thenceforward his favourite haunt.

There, protecting the delicate little Percy from the rough advances of other children of his age, he again beheld, revived, the lost angel of Holmehurst Grange : no longer under the spirit-stirring influence of the divine strains of Mozart, but full of grace, full of gentleness, full of goodness,—gay, girlish, sportive,—light as the breeze and bright as the sunshine :—lifting the little boy in her arms to the pink hawthorns, whose fragrance reminded him of Eden Castle ;—or, seated with him on the turf of the platform knotting daisy chains for his amusement, falling into an instinctive grace of attitude worthy to afford a model to Nollekens.

How he longed to claim her for his own !—How bitterly he reproached himself for having assigned her, like a punishment inflicted, to Philip Askham ! But that her presence had

solaced the last hours of her mother, which his conscience assured him were hastened by deprivation of her son, he could scarcely have obtained his own forgiveness. He refrained, however, from accosting her. Whitsuntide was at hand; when Edward might accompany him into the square, and bespeak his sister's affection for the most indulgent of uncles.

Such were the circumstances and predilections which smoothed the way for a reconciliation, at one time as improbable of accomplishment as a coalition between Liverpool and Canning. The memory of Evelyn was as a Catholic Question interposed between Philip Askham and Sir Hugh de Bayhurst. Yet before the London season was at an end, each having an object to forward by a renewal of acquaintance, they had actually broken bread together; or rather, interchanged their Château Margoux and potage à la reine!

“What a world it is!”—observed Lord Hardynge to his wife, as they sat enjoying a fervid July evening under the old cedar-tree, at Eske Hill,—with their elder boy rolling on the grass with a favourite setter of the late lord,

which seldom quitted their side.—“Whom do you think I met together, arm in arm, this morning in St. James’s Street?”

“Henry and Sir Francis Burdett?

“Guess again,—and with a still wider span!”

“My sister Margaret and Lady Grandison?”

“Arm in arm in St. James’s Street?—coming out of Brookes’s?”—

“So, so! You, who told me at dinner as an excuse for want of news, that you had not found a moment for your club!”—

“Our friend Jekyl has just got the appointment of Attorney-general to the Prince, or as I live by bread, Madam Cross-question, you should be recommended for the office!” cried her husband, affectionately patting her on the shoulder. “But does it follow, in the way of circumstantial evidence, that because I met people coming out of Brookes’s, I myself went in? I was simply proceeding from Ridgway’s to the House of Lords, down St. James’s Street, and along Pall Mall.”

“From *Ridgway’s*?—Your pamphlet is out, then?”

“ Not before Monday. I corrected the last proof this morning; after which, I had to listen to a two hours’ speech from Lord Longwind, in a dull debate on the same question;—which was like hearing my own tune droned through a bagpipe!—But you do not interest yourself about my negative and positive attraction in St. James’s Street.—What say you to Philip and Sir Hugh de Bayhurst ?”—

“ That extremes meet!—And why not?—Better for the children’s sake,—better for their own !”

“ Consistency is certainly out of fashion. But theirs is a coalition I never thought to witness! To forgive imaginary injuries is, perhaps, the greatest stretch of the magnanimity of modern times. What Philip has to complain of from De Bayhurst, I have yet to learn.”

“ As an early friend of Lady Anastasia, he may resent the unhappy life which the Scottneys believe her to lead. Like the divinity in Villamediana’s fable, he may choose the laurel that resisted *his* flame, to enjoy impunity from the thunderbolts of Jove. Do you remember—

• Viviras laurel essento  
Aun a los rayos de Jove,  
Que no es lienn sienta otras llamas  
Quien resistiò mis ardores?" "

" Which would be very pat,—but that it is coldness rather than '*ardores*' of which that Jupiter Tonans De Bayhurst, stands accused. But I don't pretend to interpret their family feuds; and, since they are all on velvet again, on velvet long may they remain. Life is not long enough to be wasted in quarrels!"

Lord Hardynge had, indeed, better occupation for his time. Having resigned, at his father's death, the office scarcely compatible with his dignity as a peer and unessential to his fortunes, he devoted the leisure thrown upon his hands, to the study of abstract politics and literary pursuits. A favourite guest at Holland House, he was an able contributor to the Edinburgh Review; and though it was asserted of him by the Donothings of the Middlemore class, as by Tacitus of Agricola, that "*in prima juventa studium philosophice erius, ultra quam concessum Romano an Senatori haussisse,*" his name already commanded respect as the author of a masterly pamphlet on Toleration; one of the

foundation-stones of the long subsequent triumph of Catholic Emancipation.

Neither he nor Emma suffered themselves to be so carried away by the current of fashionable life, as to lose sight of their happy fireside and rational pursuits. While, deluded by the mirage of Hertford House and the confidence of Castlereagh, the Regent exelaimed like Pompey,—

The people love me, and the sea is mine;  
My power's a crescent, and my auguring hope  
Foresees 'twill reach the full,—

Lord Hardynge was equally sanguine in his trust of future distinction :—sanguine, however, because *his* “auguring hope” was supported by his own efforts. No one knew better that it is only on Virgil’s tomb, laurels are of spontaneous growth ;—and his industry was stimulated by the consciousness of having a debt of honour to acquit towards the memory of his father. If such names as Douglas or Howard convey a double duty of loyalty and honour, the son of the able and excellent Lord Hardynge inherited especial responsibility of zeal in the service of his country.

"Hardyne reminds me of the retired tallow-chandler, who stipulated with his successor for the privilege of assisting in the business on melting-day," said Lord Middlemore to Emma, —indignant at his frequent failure to decoy his brother-in-law from the desk, to join him on his drag, for expeditions to race-courses and prize-fights. "By George, he works harde now he's an idle man, than he did at the office ; —harder by half than Henry, who is always to be had for asking for,—if any one cared to ask him ;—and *he* gets upwards of two thousand a-year out of our pockets, for doing the business of the nation!"

"My husband works for honour," retorted Emma ; "a harder task-mistress than the Treasury."

"But I promise you Henry is beginning to work for a task-mistress more savage than Mrs. Brownrigg!" cried Middlemore, laughing. "Henry has the worst of it just now!—In making up to Lady Emilia de Lacy, he has not only to assure Lady Lynchmore that she is slight as a thread-paper,—but to laugh at all Lynchmore's jokes,—and

answer fifty times a day his inquiries as to what the Liverpool cabinet mean to do for Ireland!"

"I wish his suit were likely to be successful," observed Emma,—earnestly.

"What,—with a rattling Irish girl,—with more sisters than thousand pounds to her fortune?"—

"The joyous, reckless, *au jour le jour* life of the Lynchmores, would be the very thing to unstarch him!"

"*Unstarch* him?"—reiterated Lord Middlemore, who, though ignorant as became the pupil of the learned Doctor Dactyl, possessed the sure instinct of a well-bred hound. "Why, you would ruin him at once!—All very well for an only son, like your husband, to talk like other people, and think as other people don't. But a younger brother like Henry, who has to speechify his way in the world, must talk as other people don't, and think as they *do*!—I'm deuced proud of all my brothers-in-law. But by George, I'm proudest of Henry; for with half as much *nous* as the others, he contrives to feed a great multitude with his five barley

loaves and two small fishes ! Henry has got the whip-hand of Hardynge ! Did you see the rap at Hardynge's famous speech on the repeal of the Orders in Council, in the leader of yesterday's Morning Post ? ”

“ And what then ? ”—cried Emma, firing up for her husband. “ There is an Arabian proverb that people only throw stones at trees laden with fruit.”

“ Palm trees, of course, if Arabian. But 'tis Henry, not your husband, you know, who's so famous for *dates*.—There's a pun for you, about as good as your proverb ! Well,—good bye !—Try to make up your mind to see Hardynge play Violino Secondo; for though he may have the power of writing clever pamphlets, Henry has the still greater one of preventing people from reading them ! ”

As the knowing turn-out of the coaching cousin rattled through the sweep-gates of Eske Hill, Emma had some difficulty in overpowering the vexation his quizzing had created. Before the dust of his wheels subsided, however, she was restored to her usual good-humour by self-gratulation on having escaped compa-

nionship for life with one whose discourse, like that of Parolles, was “chough’s language,— gabble enough, and good enough;” and of whom even Susan could not deny that—

His laughs were boisterous, as his wit was coarse,  
Loving her best of all things—but his horse.—

## CHAPTER IV.

L'injustice, qui révolte les petits esprits, ramène les âmes élevées en elles mêmes ; et leur communique une sorte d'humilité qui touche à la fierté par un endroit imperceptible.

ROUSSEAU.

To see her is to love her,  
 And love but her for ever;  
 For nature made her what she is,  
 And ne'er made sic auither!—  
 The powers above will tent her,—  
 This fortune sha' na steer her;—  
 She's like themselves sae lovely  
 That ill they'll near let ne'er her!— BURNS.

Oh ! pardon me,—my brother Edward's child.—

SHAKSPEARE.

Of those who witnessed the reconciliation between Eden Castle and Bayhurst Hall, the person who might have been supposed to experience most pleasure, but who saw it with least satisfaction, was Selina. Even to herself, she could scarcely say *why*. From her mother, she had never heard a word tending to incriminate

her father's family. Susan had been equally reserved.—Yet an intuitive repugnance warned her against opening her heart to those who had not opened their doors to her parents.

It was in vain that Lady Anastasia courted her affection by costly gifts and persevering endearments. She was grateful, but not affectionate. Some latent apprehension, perhaps, that the invitation of which her promise to her mother prohibited acceptance, might now be offered, kept her better feelings in reserve; and far less precious in her eyes was the diamond locket containing Edward's hair, presented to her by her uncle, than the hair without the locket,—or the meanest of the trinkets contained in her mother's old-fashioned desk,—or even the watch bestowed on her by old Sir Erasmus.

“I wonder,” said Emma to her mother-in-law, one day at Eske Hill, when, at the close of the season Philip and his family repaired to Bayhurst, ere they took their departure for Eden Castle for the winter,—“I wonder whether Sir Hugh will find courage to point out the

old Grange to that darling girl, or take her to visit Holmehurst Hanger?"

To satisfy her interest in the subject, Lady Hardynge even applied to her brother at the rectory for information concerning the guests at Bayhurst. But the Scotneys saw less of Lady Anastasia now that she was encircled by gayer associates ;—not from want of invitations,—but want of zest !—The Scotneys loved to comfort her, when in trouble ; or encourage her, when intent on improvement ; but amidst the swarm of London insects buzzing in her ears, the still small voice of reason would have been inaudible. To Lady Hardynge's inquiries, they could answer only that Philip and the children were entertained with the utmost pomp and show ; and that the Hall was crowded with company.

Mr. Scotney, however, could not forbear to add that, among his parishioners were many who remembered the lovely mother of Selina ; nay, a few aged crones who recollect even her grandmother ;—by whom the fair face of the child, which was as it were the face of an

angel, had been seen with equal wonder and delight. On beholding her the first Sunday in the Bayhurst pew, they had scarcely refrained from crying aloud that Evelyn Monson was once more among them. The same seraphic expression, the same unworldly demeanour, which had so captivated poor Edward Saville and his savage brother, seemed revived in *her* from whom Sir Hugh de Bayhurst could scarcely withdraw his eyes.

Towards *him*, strange to relate, Selina entertained kinder feelings than towards Lady Anastasia. So clear-sighted are the instincts of youth, that Selina was conscious of being better loved by her silent and undemonstrative uncle, than by the wife so unwearied in indulgence.

Accident, however, had some share in the preference. Mr. Askham having fulfilled his intentions of causing the miniature to be copied which had been sacrificed by his jealous rage, the artist, in vainly attempting to follow the partially effaced lineaments, had produced only a likeness of Sir Hugh; whose features were exactly those of his brother, deprived of their benignity of expression: and having learned to

cherish this image as that of their father, Selina naturally attached herself to one who seemed its breathing personation. The beautiful equestrian sketch of Edward Saville in the Bayhurst library, influenced less her misguided feelings of filial reverence, than the face of her living uncle.

But for these misgivings, the sojourn of Selina at Bayhurst would have been only too delightful. The joy of old Susan, on revisiting, after more than a dozen years of absence, her native village, was scarcely less heartfelt than that of the daughter of the Savilles in learning to appreciate the present prosperity and future honours of her brother ;—as evinced in the beautiful apartments devoted to his use,—his books, greyhounds, ponies, pheasants,—and the thousand trophies attesting on every side the greatness of their ancient line. Her interest was divided between the curious old monuments of the Monsons in Holmehurst Church, and the frightful portraits of the earlier Bayhursts, certified by their distortions as of an epoch whose imperfection constitutes a school. In those alabaster faces, or

Holbeinized features, she tried to retrace the countenance of her parents; or in some recumbent Monson with "his feet upon a couchant hound," or youthful Saville in doublet and hose, fancied she could discover a likeness to Edward,—till those ancestral faces became to her as the faces of friends.

Still greater however was the pleasure, when the riding party (which, being thanks to Elshie and early experience, an expert horsewoman, she was often permitted to join,) meditated some expedition so much beyond her strength, that she was left alone to wander over the stately library, rich with the escutcheons of the Bay-hursts, and richer with the learning of centuries;—or to enjoy unobserved, unmolested, the glorious gallery of paintings.—For to *her* the place was enchanted ground!—

Within those antique rooms,  
Great powers abide, that guard the place from wrong,  
The strength of Michael,—Raphael's angel grace,—  
Grave Titian's splendour,—Paolo's sunset dreams ;—  
And deities who once, (so poets write,)—  
Dwelt on Olympus, from their heights come down  
And sit all round in marble !—  
And beyond,—  
Beyond the deeds or dreams of beauteous art.—

Keep silent watch the spirits of human power,—  
Creative of the things that shine below!—

For Selina, the vivid imagination of youth supplied the more cultivated tastes which, on his visit to Bayhurst, had rivetted the mind of Lord Hardynge to the same enthusiastic contemplation ; and, after spending the morning in the glorious world those pictures and her own fancy called into existence, she acquired so exalted an intelligence of countenance, that the gay equestrians, on their return from their ride, could scarcely repress a cry of admiration. On returning to her less attractive home, to be claimed once more by the school room and governess, she carried with her a stock of new impressions and ideas,—a mine of intellectual treasure to be worked out for her future enrichment.

Eden Castle, however, so far from remaining a dreary pile, afforded strong evidence of the altered habits of its master. Either piqued by the example of Hexham, or instructed by that of Bayhurst, he had studied the art of rendering his house pleasant; and throughout the autumn, the mansion of the worldly man was crowded by men and women of the world.

It is true that Lady Askham, who, in spite of repeated declarations that she would never cross the threshold so long as Philip presided there, now sought an invitation, (to follow up on the young heir of Lynchmore Castle her projects for Sophia,) expressed privately to her prim lady of the bedchamber her disgust at the diminution of the establishment,—regardless that her son was in the enjoyment of a sixth part of the income which, in his father's time, upheld the pomposities of the place. But every one else was content; and after seeing Lord Delvyn and Sophia return arm-in-arm from a long ramble with Selina in Eden Chase, even her ladyship admitted that her discontents arose less from the absence of the coach and four with its postilions and its outriders, the portly house-steward and consequential housekeeper, than from the changes which the lapse of five years had effected in the neighbourhood.

Her place knew her no longer!—No Mrs. Gwatkin to be fretted into envy by her account of the excellent establishment of her three married daughters!—No Dr. Hacket to doze through her prognostications that her son

Henry would creep page by page through the Red Book, (like a mite ascending the great pyramid,) to a lordship in the Treasury, affording hope to him who had so strenuously preached the infallibility of the House of Askham, of a silk apron or lawn sleeves. For even as the name of Simprems had given place to that of Boswell on the flaming brass-plate of the Market Place, a son of the Scotneys of Holmehurst now replaced the incumbent, who, after mouldering through life in the pulpit, was now mouldering in the vault below;—the young rector being nominated ostensibly as a kinsman of the Hardynge, but in reality, on the recommendation of Lady Anastasia.

In spite of the Mansfield Street flannel and opodeldoc, even Nelly Knowles was now a widow; and a few fossile remains in the Edenbourne almshouse were the sole remaining contemporaries of the dowager. By leading the life of a tortoise in its shell, Sir Erasmus had come to pass as non-existent;—no one seeing him but his servants;—unless, perhaps, once a year, Dr. Boswell,—when the scythe of the influenza had mowed down some aged member of the household at the Lodge.

But while fretting over her lost consequence, and harassed by the complaints of her maid that there was no steward's room, as at Uppingham or Hurstwood,—no head coachman, no head-gardener, no any of the dignitaries whose much-ado-about-nothing converts a great house into a mountain in labour,—Lady Askham was not only consoled by the increasing intimacy with Hexham Hall, which the prepossessions of her favourite Henry as well as the interest of Sophia, induced her to cultivate, but by the improvement perceptible in the puny offspring of her son.

Of all her grand children, Percy was the favourite.—The little Earl of Rosneath and the promising offspring of Emma and Susan, were much less to *her* than the child whose name in the Peerage was distinguished by an asterisk, as only son of the heir presumptive of the Barony of Askham,—so long as to the name of Percy, fifth Lord Askham, was affixed the qualification of “unmarried.”—The future representative of the family honours she shared by marriage and descent, had the strongest claim on her selfish pride.

A certain gentleness of deportment which little Percy had acquired by long indisposition and the softening companionship of Selina, was a greater merit in the eyes of the formal old lady, than the boisterous animation of Lady Uppingham's handsome son ; and, accustomed to elderly people by the fondness of old Susan, he took in better part the caresses of his grandmother, than the more fastidious darlings of Eske Hill.

And through Percy, Lady Askham reached the heart of Selina !—Unaccustomed to see him petted, she could scarcely refrain from pressing her lips to the withered hand that drew towards her the neglected child of her mother.

“ What shall I do when you are gone ? ” said the affectionate girl, throwing her arms round Sophia Askham, whom she loved like a sister.  
“ You cannot think how I shall miss you.”

“ You will have Lady Anastasia here in a few days,” replied Lord Delvyn, who had ridden over with a message from his mother,—a service he was always ready to discharge towards Eden Castle,—though to no other house in the neighbourhood. “ Last night, at Hex-

ham, I heard them making up a dinner-party for her."

"Lady Anastasia is not Sophia. Besides, all sorts of people have been invited to meet her; and to *me*, the castle is not the same place when we have company in the house."

"Miss Askham and I are much obliged to you, Lina!"—said Lord Delvyn, laughing.

"Sophia is at home. And I do not call *you* company. You are nearly the same to me as Edward."

"My sisters, then, are obliged to you,—who love you like one of themselves."

"When you are at Oxford, I am sometimes many days without so much as hearing of Hexham!" replied Selina, somewhat despondingly. "My time is spent wholly in the school-room. It is only on Sophy's account that Mrs. Markham has granted my present holidays."

Neither Selina nor her companions were likely to imagine that they had been accorded at Lady Askham's desire, only that her presence might afford a sanction to the drives, rides, and rambles of her daughter with Lord Delvyn; and though, in spite of these,—in spite of sun-

dry little dances at Hexham and boatings on the Eden, the dowager was forced to proceed to Uppingham Manor without having secured her son-in-law the fourth, she was satisfied that Lynchmore Castle was their own; that the young lord was waiting only till he had taken his degree and quitted Oxford, to apply for the sanction of his parents to his proposals.—“No one who saw him could doubt that he was deeply in love.”

No sooner were they all gone, than Selina, under the slavery of perpetual study, was beginning to experience the verification of her presentiments, when a slight incident communicated new interest to her existence. Except for attendance on divine service, she had little communication with Edenbourne. Her commissions were executed by the servants; and since the recent change at the rectory, she had not a single acquaintance in the town. It was only through Susan she was aware that Eastfield had been uninhabited for the last three years; the trustees, who could not sell the property, being apparently unable to let it.

On returning, however, with Lady Askham

from her farewell visit to Hexham Hall, she noticed as they drove past, that workmen were busy with the entrance gate ; and was debarred from inquiries only by a dislike to recur to the sacred subject of her former home in the presence of her companions. But a few days after their departure, she claimed from Mrs. Markham, one fine September morning, a long-promised walk to Edenbourne, to visit the infant school newly founded by Mr. Scotney ;— and on passing the shrubbery belt of Eastfield, perceived that the work in progress consisted of a solid stone wall, half as high again as the cottage.

It was impossible to refrain from inquiries ; in answer to which, it appeared that “the property had been lately bought by the old gentleman at the Lodge, who was taking of it within his ring fence.” The original suggestion of Mrs. Gwatkin respecting the cottage, was at length adopted ; though not till the realization of the original objection of her brother ;— for now, alas ! there was indeed “nothing in it !”

While Selina was listening to the explana-

tion, it was confirmed by the appearance of the dusky face of Sir Erasmus's Indian servant, peering over the white shoulders of the mason they were addressing, over whose labours he was officiating as overseer ; and joyful was the surprise of the grizzly old Hindoo, on recognizing "Miss 'Elina," whom as a child he had often carried in his arms at the Lodge. Moutiar could scarcely recover his presence of mind to resume in a rational manner her affectionate inquiries after his master.

The name of the donor of the watch was well known to Mrs. Markham ; so that when her pupil expressed a desire to visit the old place, as the cottage would be accessible for the future solely through the grounds of the Lodge, she not only saw no objection, but thankfully embraced an opportunity of resting after so long a walk.

While she took possession of a garden seat on the lawn, under the shade of a fine service tree just then brightened into beauty by its coral berries, Selina, with tears in her eyes, gave herself up to the painful pleasure of re-

visiting that sacred spot. Every tree, every shrub, every blade of grass seemed instinct with recollections of her mother. *Here*, she had been chidden for some childish transgression,—there commended,—everywhere tended and beloved!—How happy she was *then*, under shelter of an affection that covered her round as with an angel's wings!

The little garden was now a wilderness. Untouched throughout the last three years,—for since the death of Mrs. Askham it had been unavowedly let to Sir Erasmus till his purchase could be completed,—the plants and flowers had interlaced and reproduced themselves, as in some Eastern jungle. The old man would not allow them to be cultivated, lest anything should be inadvertently removed which had been touched by the hand of Evelyn; and, as in Paradise, nature was sole gardener of the place. The birds and bees had taken possession of its solitude, as of Holmehurst Hanger. The lawn was swept by the branches of the untrimmed trees. The gravel walks were overgrown with moss. The porch seemed scarcely passable from the entanglement of clematis and honey-

suckle masking the entrance. The China roses had climbed to the summit of a tall cypress tree; blooming there in the sunshine, like happy hopes surmounting the dreariness of the grave. A thousand times more fragrant than of old,—a thousand times more bright with blossoms,—the memory of Evelyn seemed embalmed in the sweetness of her favourite home!

“And whose is *that?*”—faltered Selina, when she recovered herself sufficiently to speak,—pointing out to Moutiar a Bath chair standing near the door.

“My poor master’s, Miss ’Elina. I draw him here every day when the weather is fine,” replied the old man, lowering his voice as if afraid of being overheard.

“He is *here* then, and you did not tell me!” cried the agitated girl, instantly hastening to the house. “At length, I shall be able to thank him!”—

It was in vain that Moutiar endeavoured to detain her, uncertain whether even one so privileged might be admitted to the recluse. In a moment, she was in the little drawing-room,—now at the side,—now at the feet of the

emaciated old man, for whom that humble dwelling constituted a shrine. Startled and overcome, he called her “his child,—his dear child!”—and it was so long since that holy name had greeted the ear of Selina,—so long since she had wept with unrestrained tenderness over the precious associations it evoked,—that there needed no answer to his appeal. Their tears fell together.

By degrees, composure was restored; and then, what a multitude of questions betrayed the unaltered interest of her scarcely recognizable old friend!—Edward,—he wanted to hear of Edward,—his proficiency at Eton,—his pursuits at Bayhurst,—the prospects of his after life. He was evidently prepared to find the intelligence of a woman, in one he had so lately left a child;—for of herself, he asked not a single question. She was the image of her mother;—and for *him*, that resemblance comprehended every excellence and every charm.

While they were still talking, forgetting everything in the past, Mrs. Markham made her appearance to claim her pupil. Aware that the old gentleman before her had been the inti-

mate friend of Selina's late mother, and Eastfield her earliest home, she was in no haste to interrupt their interview; and when he politely requested permission for Miss Saville to accompany him a few hundred yards through his grounds, to see the new road he had made from the Cottage to the Lodge, she considerately forbore to intrude on those whose recent emotions were still so manifest. Having agreed to await at Eastfield her pupil's return, while the Bath chair and its attendants disappeared through the shrubberies, she gladly resumed her seat.

The minutes slipped by, however, till so long appeared the time of Selina's absence, that the good governess grew first impatient, then angry, then alarmed. Miss Saville had been gone more than half an hour,—nearly an hour,—doubtless carried away by her inclinations to accompany her old friend as far as the house; and thither Mrs. Markham resolved to proceed, in pursuit of the truant.

Away she went, accordingly; following the trace of the wheels on the finely gravelled road, bordered on either side by shelving shrubberies of choice American plants, and barberry bushes

drooping to the ground under the weight of their scarlet fruitage. By degrees, however, the plantation assumed a graver character. Kalmias and rhododendrons were replaced by the feathering tamarisk,—the arbor vitæ,—the arbutus,—the cypress,—the gloomy yew; till at length, she discovered at a distance, thrown out by the dark foliage of a grove of pine trees, the white gleam of the chapel which she had often heard cited at Edenbourne as the favourite resort of the pious recluse.

There, doubtless, had Selina taken refuge. For near it stood the Bath chair, with the servant in attendance; and before she could attain the spot, she saw her young charge issue from the half-open door and descend the marble steps;—not with her usual light-footed alacrity,—but heavily and sadly,—pausing every now and then on her road towards the cottage, and placing her hand upon her heart, as if to repress the tumult of her feelings.

When they met, Selina threw herself into her arms, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

“Forgive me for detaining you so long,”

said she, when her composure was sufficiently restored to admit of replying to the interrogations of her anxious companion; “and be still more kind, in forbearing to inquire what detained me.—I could not leave that dear old friend, overcome by distress!—We have been weeping and praying together. Do not ask me why or where.—The secret is *his*.—He would grieve to have it known.—Let us go home again, dear Mrs. Markham, if you are sufficiently rested. I cannot,—no, *indeed I cannot* enter Edenbourne to-day.”

Satisfied from her knowledge of Selina’s nature that the secret thus withheld from her was of a blameless nature, and perhaps in some degree cognizant of the truth, the kind governess refrained from a single inquiry.—All that was at present necessary was to pacify the poor girl’s emotions.—Time would open her heart.

Selina’s heart was always open; but on this occasion, the tenderest delicacy of feeling sealed her lips. Though unaware that her venerable friend had ever pretended to be more to her mother than a devoted friend, that friend-

ship was sanctified by the grave into something of a solemn mystery.

The temple into which, leaning on the arm of the faithful Moutiar, he had guided her steps, was consecrated as an expiatory chapel. Constructed throughout of Carrara marble, it contained only a simple altar—only a nameless monument. No inscription, save the words “*SPES UNICA*” carved on the wall above a colossal cross of the same spotless material;—before which, knelt a female figure,—Faith, if you will;—but to all who had ever beheld the object of his veneration,—Evelyn,—only Evelyn!—

Indignant at the sordid proportions of a tablet erected by the widower in the chancel at Edenbourne, at the foot of the stately monuments of his family, inscribed with a pompous tribute to his own sorrows and the merits of the dead,—yet unprivileged to amend its meanness by a public token of respect, Sir Erasmus consoled himself by lavishing the ample means at his command on a spot to which he daily repaired, to mingle in his prayers the name of his lost angel, with supplications that the Al-

mighty, who had taken her to himself, would give grace to those who survived, to imitate her virtues.

Such was the holy ground to which Selina, with a bursting heart, had accompanied her aged friend. Not a word was breathed to indicate the object of the chapel. But on her mother's angelic face alone, had she beheld such rapture of pious exaltation as irradiated the eyes of that kneeling saint!

A few days afterwards, before she had found courage to acquaint her step-father, (without allusion to the unusual circumstances attending the meeting,) with her visit to Eastfield and interview with their venerable neighbour, arrived the De Bayhursts, on their first visit to Eden Castle: and from that moment, the will and pleasure of Lady Anastasia became paramount in the house. It was no moment for reminiscences of the past.

It struck Selina that her uncle was looking grave,—graver than he was wont to do at Bayhurst.—But this was not surprising.—His unjust estrangement from his brother's widow could not fail to recur to his mind in visiting the

neighbourhood where she had so long struggled against poverty, and so meekly resigned herself to death.—Young as Selina was, and ignorant of the true nature of their relative position, she fully understood that he must feel conscience-stricken at Edenbourne.

Aware that, on pretence of a private errand at the post-office, he had visited Eastfield without obtaining admittance, and, on pretence of antiquarian zeal, the church where her poor mother was lying, how great would have been her satisfaction to conduct him to the sacred spot known only to herself and the grey-headed mourner of the Lodge: where the memory of her they mourned was kept holier than in any other on earth, save the grateful hearts of the poor.

In defiance of the gaieties of the neighbourhood,—the mirth of Lord Lynchmore,—the hospitalities of the Castle, every day, the depression of the guest seemed to augment.—Listless and pre-occupied, he ceased to join the riding parties to which he was so poor an addition; and, on pretence of indisposition, retired to rest before the music or dancing of the

evening commenced. He sometimes carried off little Percy to his dressing-room, and amused the child for hours, when none were nigh to notice them ; or engaged Selina to show him her favourite walks in the Chase,—sitting or sauntering by her side, in silent abstraction. When his little niece expressed to Lady Anastasia her fears that her uncle was not sufficiently amused at Eden Castle, she was assured that he was subject to these fits of despondency, and that no notice must be taken ;—and it was perhaps in pursuance of this system of studied disregard, that she suffered *her* attention to be absorbed by her host.

The emotions experienced by Sir Hugh de Bayhurst were in fact greater than even himself was prepared for. He had fancied that unhappy passion to have subsided in his nature, like the sinking of blood into the earth ; and that the recent routine of his domestic life, so nearly amounting to happiness, had effaced all trace of his youthful attachment. He had honestly exerted himself for its extirpation. Ere he accomplished the reconciliation with Philip Askham which was to reunite him with

Selina, he had sworn within himself to avoid all recurrence to the past;—and so long as his word remained unbroken, had been able to preserve the semblance of courtesy towards his once detested rival.

But the circumstances into which he was forced, forced back in their turn upon his mind all he had so strenuously endeavoured to forget. Under that roof, how could he do otherwise than think of Evelyn!—Almost within view of the humble retreat into which she had been hunted by his malice, and of the church where she was at rest,—her homes for time and eternity,—how could he refrain from pressing her feeble boy to his heart;—how forbear to regard with renewed and still increasing hatred the man who had wiped from her eyes the tears he had caused to flow!—

For of his real grounds of indignation against her husband, he knew as little, as Philip of the measure of offence of the man by whom she had been aggrieved and persecuted.

To Selina, meanwhile, the glee of Lady Anastasia was almost more annoying than the sadness of her uncle. Never had she seen her so gay!

Towards her husband, her manner had lost its deference—towards herself, its gentleness!—Instead of her former high-bred self-possession, her tone was wild and abrupt. At Hexham, her exhilaration became more girlish than that of the De Lacs,—at Eden Castle her restlessness was unappeasable.—Her movements were hurried and irregular, as those of a watch whose main-spring is at fault.

Like others of her age, less curious about causes than effects, the little girl was at no pains to examine into the origin of the change. It was enough that the evil existed.

One day, the De Lacs having driven over to rehearse, during the absence of the gentlemen for their pheasant shooting, an act of the opera of “*L'Inganno Felice*,” which they were getting up for representation at Hexham,—after luncheon, when the performance was at an end, Lady Hester and Lady Harriet de Lacy, full of Irish spirits and the excitement of the moment, took possession of a little volume of manuscript music belonging to Lady Anastasia; which they refused to return till she granted them permission to copy some Modinhas given

her by one of Lady Grandison's protégés, which were then rare in England.

After a prolonged dispute and playful defiance, the two girls, who were as at home in the house, fled from her pursuit not only through the suite of drawing-rooms, but across the hall and up the grand staircase, with the intention of taking refuge in the school-room of Selina; who, attracted to the corridor by the noise, beheld Lady Anastasia open in succession the doors of the various rooms, in search of the fugitives

The little girl's breath came short, as she saw her approach the last chamber in the gallery; for it was one held so sacred in the castle, that, though left open like the rest, no one ever crossed the threshold. The hand of the intruder was already on the lock,—when Selina darted forward to intercept her.

“No, no,—not *there!*—You must not enter *there!*”—said she; on which Lady Anastasia, concluding from her incoherency and heightened colour that her young friends were concealed within, instantly burst into the room.

They were not there!—*Nothing* was there,

but the autumnal sunshine, streaming in upon the silenee and chintz hangings of an uninhabited bed-room. How, therefore, was Lady Anastasia to affix a meaning to the deathlike paleness and dilated eyes with which the dumb-stricken girl beheld her pursue her search behind the furniture and bed-curtains?—How was she to conjecture that the bed had never been approached by Selina, save with blessings on her lips and tears in her eyes;—that the poor child ever beheld there the shrouded form she had once seen extended on its sheet,—or the dying looks once fixed from that deserted pillow so fondly, so wistfully on her own!—

The laughter of the De Lacy girls resounded from an adjoining chamber; to which Lady Anastasia, breathless with the haste of her pursuit, replied by a cry of joyous exultation;—and the unwonted sound of merriment in that sacred silent spot, almost distracted the little girl.

“ My poor, poor mother!”—burst from her quivering lips,—as she sank, half fainting into a chair.

On discovering the offence she had inadver-

tently committed, Lady Anastasia could not readily pardon the feelings she had so deeply wounded.—Excuses, indeed, she did not spare But while Lady Hester and her sister rushed to Selina's side, to fold her in their arms and mingle their tears with hers,—touched to the heart that “anything should have vexed their dear, dear Lina,” the real offender retired to her room to meditate in mortified resentment over what had occurred. She could not forgive *herself*; but it was provoking not to be able to blame Selina!—

It was not often, however, that occurrences so vexatious resulted from the intimacy between the Castle and the Hall. Seldom a day passed, without a meeting between some portion or other of the two families;—always pleasant parties going on,—always projects for the future.—To De Bayhurst, all this would have appeared the result of the views of Henry Askham on Lady Emilia de Lacy, and the attachment of Lord Delvyn to Sophia Askham, of which rumours had reached him in town; but that, on occasion of his visit to Edenbourne church, under the auspices of William Scot-

ney, (who knowing him from a boy as a country neighbour, was on a more intimate footing with him than with his new patron,) he received a hint that, whatever might be the affection of the Tory Fabius for Lady Emilia, the elder brother was the happy man!—Such was the servants' hall version of the business, which, through the gossip of the market-place, had reached the rectory; and the report taken on trust by young Scotney, was readily accepted by Sir Hugh.

On acquainting Lady Anastasia that their friend Mr. Askham was likely to form a second marriage, she so earnestly confirmed the probability of the match, that it was clear she knew better! Not clear, indeed, to her husband; who, conceiving her intelligence to be derived from the De Lacy girls, was too eager to give it credit, to note the prevarications of her story. It was so satisfactory, while rambling with his little niece through the beautiful home park which he had ascertained to have been the favourite haunt of Evelyn, every step of which the child rendered sacred by some anecdote of her mother,—to know that such reminiscences

nad no longer an interest for any member of the riding party that was pursuing its way to Carlton, or exploring the numerous ruins scattered on the lovely banks of the Eden!—It was such a triumph, that even the memory of the hateful ties uniting his brother's widow to Philip Askham, should be wholly effaced!—

Not once during his visit, however, had he found himself alone with his host. Trevor, Lesly, and Mr. Lechmere of Carlton, belonged to all their shooting parties; and on other occasions, the De Lacs, Mrs. Lechmere, or Lady Anastasia herself, prevented all hazard of a tête-à-tête. But though this accorded well with his newly-renovated antipathies, it was necessary, ere he left the castle, that they should come to an understanding on several questions of strong family interest, important to both.

Several times had De Bayhurst been on the point of broaching these subjects; when sudden emotion choked his utterance, and rendered explanation impossible. Several times, when riding with Philip and the rest, he had attempted to draw him apart for private conver-

sation. But the moment they were thus detached, instead of accomplishing his purpose, an insurmountable repugnance to touch on the points marking the intersection of their several destinies, suspended the words upon his lips; and with a vacant laugh, he broke into some topic of the day, uninteresting to both.

But when at length the moment of their departure was fixed, on the day preceding, De Bayhurst, with a face as pale as ashes, followed his host into the library, on pretence of asking to see some Agricultural Reports, collected and commented on by the late Lord Askham, and incidentally referred to by Philip; who, had he been interested in the lucidity of intellect of his guest, could scarcely have failed to notice on the present occasion the inconsistency and absurdity of the observations which betrayed his absence of mind. As it was, he was thinking only how soonest to get rid of him!—

After examining the Reports, instead of fulfilling the unexpressed wishes of Philip Askham by noticing, thanks to the old bulil clock on the chimney-piece, that the dressing-bell was about to ring, he remained nailed to the library

chair in which he had taken up his position on pretence of extracting certain dates from the long undisturbed quartos placed before him ; and in order to conceal his embarrassment of countenance, kept examining his hands, to which the edges of the neglected books had imparted particles of dust, which he fanned away with studied carelessness while striking into the subject so near his heart.

For when the mighty secret was out at last,—it was nothing less than a proposal to resume the guardianship of his little niece !—

“ It was a grievous pity,” he said, “ to separate the two children. Now that their mother was gone, whose feelings had been conceded to in the present arrangement,—now, above all, that Mr. Askham was likely to form another connexion,—he trusted that no objection would be raised to the removal of Selina to Bayhurst Hall ?”—

Philip Askham was staggered. For such a proposition, he was wholly unprepared. But, Cunning being a monster fed on mysteries, like most people having anything to conceal, he was becoming artful as he was selfish ; and not

only saw his advantage, but determined to retain it. The possession of Selina was the only tie uniting him with De Bayhurst; over whom, it was necessary that he should possess a hold.

To assign the legal obligations he had undertaken towards his step-daughter at the express desire of Sir Hugh, would have been useless; for a contract mutually made, might be mutually rescinded. The only insuperable obstacle to plead, was a deathbed promise to his wife that he would not separate himself from her child.

In answer to a slight expression of surprise from his companion, (who knew him to have been in town at the moment of Evelyn's decease,) he stated the condition to have been made in a posthumous letter. Fain would De Bayhurst have implored a sight of it. But such a request, by implying mistrust of Philip's veracity, must have provoked a breach between them, foreign to his intentions.

Defeated in his proposal by a courteous but steady refusal, on grounds it was impossible to impeach, Sir Hugh resolved to take patience. When the second marriage of Askham was

accomplished, the bridegroom would perhaps become more amenable; and though he could not now persist, he would not despair. A more urgent interest at present occupied his thoughts.

"Now that we have been forced," said he, after resigning himself to Philip's determination, "into the consideration of a subject equally painful to both,—in order to avoid its renewal, let me seize the opportunity to inquire whether you ever happened to hear—" (for worlds could he not at that moment have pronounced the name of Evelyn!)"—"at what church,—or in what parish,—was solemnized the marriage of my late brother?"

Without a moment's pause, it was easy to answer in the negative. Such a subject was never likely to be *directly* discussed between him and his wife. But even collaterally, no mention could he recall to mind. In order however to impress him with the urgency of the inquiry, De Bayhurst saw fit to explain his motives.

"On obtaining the sign manual to the patent extending to my nephew our family change of name," said he, "I was required to furnish the

Herald's Office with the marriage certificates of his parents, and one of his baptism.—The latter, it was easy to procure; for I knew him to have been born in the house where my poor brother breathed his last; and with it, the officials were fortunately content. For of the marriage, no tidings could I obtain!—With yourself, still overwhelmed with the grief of your recent bereavement, I could not then venture to communicate on such a subject. But since on various future occasions such a document must be forthcoming, your interest in the fortunes of Edward will, I am sure, induce you to overlook my breach of delicacy.—In a word, *can you assist me?*"

"I fear not,—I *greatly* fear not!" replied Philip, with equal readiness. "There is an old servant in this house, who was formerly attached to the Monson family. But I have reason to know that she was not privy to the marriage. She did not rejoin her mistress till within a few days of Selina's birth."

"Most unfortunate!" ejaculated Sir Hugh, sinking back into his chair. "Lord Llandore, the heir to the Bayhurst property, in the event of my

brother dying without legitimate issue, is a man from whom my nephew would experience the utmost difficulty, in the event of any informality in his title. I am, therefore, most anxious that, during my lifetime, everything should be plain beyond dispute."

" Set your mind at ease, then !" cried Philip, with sudden recollection. " All is, I hope, secure. Among the papers of my lamented wife, I remember once seeing,—it was on the occasion of,—it was—no matter !—an envelope, I say, passed through my hands endorsed as containing her marriage certificate, and the certificates of baptism of the children."

" And these are still in your possession ?"—demanded Sir Hugh, with renovated eagerness, starting forward in his chair.

" I can scarcely say in my possession ; for a sealed packet was bequeathed by Mrs. Askham to Selina, containing her family papers, with express injunctions that it should not be opened till she attained the age of fourteen,—of which nearly a year is wanting."

" How unlucky !—Still, you are certain that

the certificate is contained in the sealed packet?"

"As certain as it is possible to be, without ocular demonstration. For the desk formerly containing the papers, was given to the little girl at once, with a few family trinkets; and among them, there was not a vestige of paper or writing."

"And in whose custody has the more important packet remained?" — demanded the baronet. And it was a comfort to Philip Askham that he was not forced to answer,—"in mine!"

"I placed it," said he, with some assumption of dignity, "in the hands of Mr. Moran, the solicitor selected by the children's mother to be trustee of the marriage settlement that secured them her little fortune."

"In that case," cried Sir Hugh, greatly relieved, "I have no further uneasiness. All I entreat is that, when the time arrives for opening the packet, you will impress on my little niece the great importance of the document; and she will perhaps deposit it in my keeping,—or at all events, afford the information necessary to obtain a copy."

There was no difficulty in promising this in the name of Selina; to whom her brother's interests were dearer than her own. But while Philip was satisfying the mind of Sir Hugh by fresh assurances, the clang of the dressing-bell luckily drowned his words, and broke up the conference.—It was a relief to both that so good an excuse was afforded for its abrupt termination.

## CHAPTER V.

Le bien et le mal,"mélés et confondus,  
S'offrent de toutes parts a mes yeux éperdus !  
Inhabile a sonder ce chaos adultère,  
Sans vioix pour le nier,—irrité de le taire,—  
De l'ombre à la clarté las de flotter ainsi,  
Aux démons de la vie mondaine, j'ai demandé merci.

LA CAUSSADE.

—Aliusque et idem  
Nasceris—

HORACE.

"DID you ever see a fellow in such prodigious feather as Askham?" said Sir Walter Lesly to Trevor,—soon after Philip's instalmen in town, the following spring. "He is coming out stronger and stronger!"—

"There was always the making of *something*

in him,”—languidly replied the dandy, as he sat skimming the morning papers at Watier’s. “In proper training he might have become one of *us!*—*Mais que voulez vous!* By marrying at five-and-twenty, Askham stifled himself in a wet blanket!”—

“ Rather, in a sheet of lead!” retorted Lesly.—“ *Felo de se*, without extenuating circumstances!—A match that positively did *nothing* for him,—except bury him up to the ears in respectability.”

“ Do you remember,” said Trevor, without withdrawing his eyes from the advertisements of the Morning Post,—“ those dreadful four days he once decoyed us into spending with him, at the time he used to trot to covert on one of his wife’s coach-horses; and kept a beast of a cook, who nearly poisoned us by serving up a *salmi de bœcasses, au blanc?*”

“ To be sure I do!—A fortnight at Middlemore’s did not get the taste of his domestic felicity out of my mouth!”—said Lesly, extending himself in a lounging chair.

“ As far as *cuisine* goes, Lunardelli, whom I recommended to him, (*et pour cause,*) and

with whom Yarmouth took immense pains when he was *sous chef* at Hertford House,—soon set matters to rights. The *croûtons giboyés* they gave me last autumn at Eden, were something sublime!"

"Even now, however, one can't say much for his stables!" rejoined Lesly.—" Yet I shouldn't be surprised if those hunters of his fetched from sixteen to eighteen hundred guineas, if brought up to Tattersalls,—including of course Black Muley, for whom he refused three hundred and fifty from Middlemore."

"I wonder what put Askham into such preposterous spirits last night [at Grandison House?]" observed Trevor,—"for the division had gone hard against them!—Byron would have it that De Bayhurst had gained a prize in the lottery,—all things being now in common between them!"

"Byron cannot stand Philip Askham!—Byron swears that if he had been shut up, like Ugolino, in the tower of Famine, he would not only have eaten his children, but picked their bones."

"*Entre nous*, the Childe had a prodigious mind to fall in love with Lady Anastasia himself,—by way of antithesis, I suppose, to his gazelle-eyed Leila!—And De Bayhurst would certainly have topped his part in Hassan!—Conceive him in a mountain-pass of the South Downs, with a troop of his Sussex dragoons,—giaour-hunting!—

Stern Bayhurst hath a journey ta'en,  
With twenty yeomen in his train,—  
Each armed as best becomes a man,  
With beef in pouch, and beer in cann;  
The captain first, armed for the levee,  
Trailing a sabre, hot and heavy,—  
Stain'd with— ”

"Hush, hush!" interrupted Sir Walter Lessly. "Yonder sits that young donkey, Hinton Hort, all ears and bray; and it is more sure he will circulate your parody, than that De Bayhurst would appoint you his laureat."

"Who cares *what* a man likes, whom *no one* likes?" said Trevor, shrugging his shoulders.

"I do, for one,—that is, for *number* one;—when he happens to have such hock in his

cellar and shooting on his estates as De Bayhurst.—Remember, too, that first sulky fit of his kept us three years out of our property ;—for I take it that providence created country baronets expressly to find venison and claret for young ravens like you and I!"

" So long as Askham goes it at his present rate, young ravens and old can dispense with De Bayhurst !"—rejoined Horace Trevor. " I should be sorry to cover Askham's present expenditure with ten thousand a year ! Depend upon it Lunardelli does not let him off under three,—for his dinners are incomparably the best in London."

" I don't suppose it falls on *him* to keep up the borough ?"—rejoined Sir Walter. " Do you know what they allow him for dry-nursing the Askham estates ?"—

" Something considerable. But like Van, the omnipotent of the exchequer, he has it all his own way !—Issue of bills unlimited !—And in the late lord's time, the property passed for one of the finest in the kingdom. Don't you remember at Eton, how Cis Danby used to pit Percy Askham against Middlemore, to

see which of the cousins would brag loudest about the list of killed and wounded in his preserves?"—

"I suppose Askham feels pretty sure of it all for his boy?" said Lesly. "According to Middlemore's account, the Frenchwoman who got hold of Percy on his arrival at Verdun, (actress,—*chanteuse*,—*danseuse*,—or worse,) will take care never to let him marry!"

"His own wits will take care never to let him marry," retorted Trevor. "He was always a deuced deal sharper than Philip."

"Do you dine in Brook Street to-day?" inquired Lesly, drily.

"No! I was obliged to put him off."

"A command from Carlton House?"

Trevor nodded assent. "They are glad to get one there just now as often as they can," said he, with an *air accablé*; "for there is not as much French in the whole household as will afford *oui* or *non* to Madame Lieven's *interrogatoire à perpétuité*! How they will make it out with the De Staels, is 'a thing to dream of not to tell.'"

"Last night at Grandison House, some one

protested that Corinne arrived here with the most flagitious intentions against the Regent!" said Lesly, laughing.—"What a Psyche, for what a Cupid!"—

"Another of Byron's hoaxes!—But here he comes!"—continued he, as the handsome poet limped into the adjoining room, and threw himself, without noticing them, on the sofa. "Couldn't one swear, from his *mauvaise honte*, that he had just been perpetrating a *chef d'œuvre*?"

"In my opinion there is as much vanity in *his* laying his roe's-eggs without a cackle, as in Petrel's crowing like chanticleer over his wren's nest!"—rejoined Trevor. "I hope they won't spoil him at Holland House. Byron is too good a fellow to be bound in blue and yellow. 'Tis a fine thing to be a popular poet, if but to enable one to show one's conviction that it is a finer thing to be a man of the world!—I should like to have written that thing with the Turkish name, if only to give a new vogue to my mixtures at Pontet's and Delcroix's!"

It was just the moment when the Dandies

were beginning to outdandy themselves,—from fear of being distanced in impertinence by the Exclusives ; a new power recently arisen in the world of fashion.

And in the present age, new powers are not to be despised. The nineteenth century has seen more than one Jonah's gourd start up in a night, to vie with the veterans of the forest. The nineteenth century, which has witnessed the Minerva-like engenderment of the South American republics, and re-substantiation of the kingdoms of Leopold and Otho out of the spectres of ancient Greece and Belgic Gaul, has also beheld the sudden growth of dynasties, whose reticulation overspread the face of Europe with its toils ere cognizant of their existence:—the Bonapartes, for instance, emerging ready-crowned, like Banquo's issue, from the office of a Corsican attorney; and the Rothschilds, upstarting ready *thalered*, from a squalid compting-house of the Frankfort Juden Gasse !—

The former, indeed, have returned as dust to dust, and are no more seen ! But the dust of the latter being gold-dust, they have sub-

stantiated their bullion thrones in the various capitals of Europe ; and, like Constance, bidden “ kings come and bow to them :”—and kings have done as they were bid, and become, like Lancelot Gobbo, servitors to the rich Jew !—

Having little (with two fair exceptions) to recommend them, beyond the power possessed by the long-eared Midas, of converting all they touch to gold, and the excellent tact of sparing a handful of their golden grain for the furrow of fashionable hospitality to bring forth golden harvests a thousand fold,—the enfeoffed children of Israel, who seize as waifs and strays of the golden calf every splendid mansion or beautiful villa left abandoned by some aristocratic wreck, and who reverence on their knees, as a badge of chivalry or when sparkling with brilliants, the cross on which elsewhere they spit their scorn,—are in fact at this moment twice as potent, and maintain a far more ramified influence in society, than the much-denounced Congregation of Loyola, whom the pages of Eugene Sue have recently held up *in terrorem*. For if the Jesuits were the con-

fessors of half the kings in Europe, be it remembered that the Rothschilds are their bankers; and should ever the Holy Roman empire be reconstructed, the chances are a thousand to one (we were about to write fifty per cent.) that Duke Rothschild I. will obtain a vote in the Diet!—

Under the auspices of a rival power, somewhat secondary to these vicegerents of Mammon, the season of 1813, meanwhile, was advancing in brilliant ovation. The dawn of a new order of things was perceptible.—*Le commencement de la fin commençait à poindre.* The French armies had retreated from Russia in disorder; and, thanks to Russia, disorder was making notable progress at home.

For so long as the English remain isolated from continental infection by the *cordon sanitaire* of their white cliffs and immaculate virtues, the proprieties engrafted on our original crabstock in the days of the Puritans, continue to put forth new shoots, and create a wholesome shade throughout the land. But the moment the re-opening of the ports enables foreign trappers to find sport in our hunting-

grounds, loud rings the axe and down goes *la forêt des préjugés*,—leaving, like all hasty clearances, the stumps of our stemless virtues protruding from the soil, to render it unavailable for lighter produce.—

And already, a vast portion of the continent had renewed with us the reciprocation of human exports. Our new ally, Russia, was hugging the Prince Regent to its bosom, as became its ursine interests. Suits of sable were now our only wear,—and caviar our daily bread.—Every day brought over droves of Russian bears,—Kalmuck crossed with Parisian;—a hybrid breed, engendered by the passion of Catherine and her grandson for be-daubing with French polish their Russian deals. For the *rocalile* Parisianism of *petits maitres* and *petites maitresses* having emigrated with the Bourbons to Mittau, and never returned, the aristocracies of St. Petersburg and Warsaw exhibited, at that moment, a far closer imitation of the manners of the *ancien régime*, than the republicanized *salons* of imperial France.—

From St. Petersburg, therefore, (by much such

a circumambientibus as if we were to re-imbibe from New England in the nineteenth century, the customs which the pilgrim fathers conveyed from Old England in the seventeenth,) the west of Europe received back, with the order of St. Andrew and St. George, the fastidious fribbledom of the days of red heels and maréchale powder, and the Madame de Pompadour-ism of Versailles.—

The world of fashion,—(a supplemental quarter of the modern earth,)—being submitted just then, like all other quarters, to Tory ascendancy, had unluckily fallen a victim to the policy of the Tories. For what more probable than that the admonitory system which induced the Spartans to exhibit drunken Helots to their offspring by way of warning against inebriation, suggested the advantage of nailing up, like a kite or weasel, the consular government of the Exclusives, that its odium might advance the cause of absolute monarchy?—

In the majestic triumvirate, was included Lady Grandison! With the same astucious policy which induced the Emperor Alexander

to extend in amity to Napoleon the hand originally too feeble to repel him from his frontier, she had entered into a league, offensive and defensive, with the new Russian ambassadress; who treated London as Malibran used to treat provincial theatres,—causing the dresses and decorations to be burnt, and the company to be put into training, ere she would so much as condescend to rehearse.

Reared in the rarified atmosphere of diplomacy, and forming a species of golden telegraph for the secret service of the Muscovite cabinet, the nimble-witted Countess conceived herself to be a century in advance of those she had undertaken to civilize. But while forbearingly accepting Antony and Lepidus for colleagues till able to stand alone in her new government, she retained for herself the *toga palmata* and *scipio eburneus* of Western Empire,—warring with the East by the hands of one fair triumvir, and enforcing her lists of proscription by those of the third;—while the slavish patricians of London voluntarily enlisted as lictors, to support the dignity of her vory chair!—Among the first acts of her

consulate, by the way, may be enumerated the comprehension of Harley Street within the liberties of fashion!—

“Lady Grandison is a cleverer woman than I took her for, Emma!”—said Lord Hardynge, one day to his wife, who retained her appropriate position in the *beau monde*, without assuming its livery, or forfeiting the better attributes of her nature more than the waters of the Rhone their purity by transit through the lake of Constance.—“Instead of resigning herself to be one of the three heads of Cerberus, I thought nothing less would content her than to have all the bark to herself. I was afraid we were going to have a Grandison faction. Like the poor Princess of Wales, who, after compelling the first men in the land to throw up her cause, lends her name as a war-cry to the city malcontents, (as some duchess’s court petticoat scours the streets as the paraphernalia of a May-day queen,) I expected my old friend to exhibit a signal downfall!”

“Instead of which, Grandison House has been twice as pleasant since the honours of fashion were divided!”

“ The only danger is lest it become *too* pleasant !”—resumed Lord Hardynge. “ I do not pretend to be more primitive than my neighbours; for I have heard the chimes at midnight like other men.—But rather than see the *cavaliere servente* system established in England, let us remain till doomsday the heinous savages we are stated to have been, before this new winnowing machine of Almack’s was set up !—At Carlton House, evil example is of less moment, the circle being of so limited and peculiar a nature. But from the influence of Grandison House, the very Portico or Academus of good manners, which, whenever popularity is in request, stretches its hospitalities to its five hundred guests like other mansions less fastidious,—the amount of mischief is incalculable !”

“ Waste no arithmetic on it then, but let the world take care of itself !” replied Emma. *Our* sympathy would profit it as little, I fear, as that of the couple in ancient times, who wept themselves to death over its iniquities. The only person who causes *me* uneasiness, is Philip !”

"By Philip, *s'entend*, of course, Lady Anastasia ;—since *they* are becoming one and indivisible!"—

"And supposing others were to make the same ill-natured remark?"—

"I stand corrected. Nay, I heartily wish, dear Emma, I had anything civiller to say about them," rejoined Lord Hardynge, good-humouredly, "for, but for *them*, I should run some risk of becoming a fatalist!—The chance that drove my phaeton past Uppingham House in the nick of time to catch a glimpse of the only woman on earth who would have suited me as a wife,—the better half of my Androgynes,—ought certainly to have made *them* understand each other in time to become one flesh. As it is, I fear, (as Joseph Surface does,) 'that they are giving that worthy man the baronet much uneasiness!'"

"*There* you are luckily mistaken!" cried Emma,—"for I have watched them all narrowly. A month ago, I received a charming letter from your uncle Scotney, imploring my interposition in behalf of Lady Anastasia, as a stray lamb of his flock; and describing with

deep feeling the disadvantages with which she had contended in early life, and her subsequent aspirings after excellence."

" And was my poor dear Dr. Primrose of an uncle, simple-hearted enough to fancy Philip Askham the man to be remonstrated with, on such a subject, by his younger sister ?"

" More patiently, perhaps, than by an elder friend. But without direct interference, good is sometimes effected. In most cases of this nature, mere imprudence causes a woman to be slighted, who, when smarting under the slight, becomes *more* than imprudent ; and it would be hard indeed if Margaret, Susan, and myse united, could do nothing to avert, in the present instance, the Lilliputian pin's pricks of the scandal-mongers. Such has been our motive for going out this season twenty times more than usual, or than we desire ; that people may perceive Lady Anastasia to be as intimate with the whole Askham family as with Philip."

" Excellently intended, dearest Emma !" cried her husband. " But believe me, you might as well attempt to arrest the conflagration of a varnish manufactory once in flames, as the progress of scan. mag. ! "

" So we accustom ourselves to say ; and the poor manufactory is left to blaze !—But for Philip's sake,—for Anastasia's,—and, above all, for that of little Selina,—let us set all our engines to work !"

" You omitted, however, in enumerating the family forces, to name the most influential Askham of you all !"

" Henry ?"—

" Rather his fair bride—Lady Isabella ! If Emilia de Lacy had married him, (instead of setting her heart, as they pretend, on his graceless elder brother,) I should have left him out of the question. But the Duke of Norcliffe's sister is worth her weight in tracts !—The certificate of any one of her mother's daughters might suffice for a silk apron or lawn sleeves ! Never was rigid righteousness so super rigid ; straining, not only at a gnat, but a midge, or a mote in the sunbeam.—Since Henry's marriage, I take off my hat to him if I see him at half a street's distance ! I look upon the Honourable Henry Askham as semi-canonical. If the Irish secretary, young Peel, were only out of his light, I would venture a pony on Henry's

becoming prime minister, with a new edition of Protestantism flourishing under his patronage, in the reign of Princess Charlotte's son."

"Henry was a lucky man, however, to obtain such a wife as Lady Isabella," replied Emma, more gravely. "Admit that it implies some compliment to the merits of a poor younger brother, to be chosen by a duke's daughter, with excellent principles and a fortune of fifty thousand pounds!"

"Principles and interest, eh?—But if you were to say a *hundred* thousand, you would be within the mark; since for every guinea she brings, she will save another!"—retorted Lord Hardynge.

Sure such a pair were never seen,—  
So sparing in their thrifty nature!"

"Thrifty perhaps,—but let us be thankful that one Askham, at least, is safe from the workhouse!" remonstrated Emma. "Two spendthrifts in the family are enough; and Percy and Philip are burning the old Yule clog at both ends, and in the middle!"

"They must get Henry to pay their debts for them;—though I doubt whether the sight

of all his family in rags, would extract a maravedi from his *cher magot*. I never saw a fellow more bent on securing something to live upon after his death!"—

"I certainly *would* engage the good offices of Lady Isabella," resumed Emma,—more occupied with the delinquencies of her second brother than the foibles of the third,—"but that I am afraid of giving her a hint likely to alarm the prudery of the Norecliffe family. Every day, they hold a sort of privy council, at one or other of their houses, about what is or is not proper to be done; and if once their *collet monté* set were to set up its quills at Lady Anastasia, the evil would be irreparable! — Yet, in my opinion, the Christian injunction, 'Let him who is without sin among you cast a stone at her,' implied plenary absolution,—since those guiltless themselves, would refrain as an act of mercy!"

"I am afraid poor Lady Isabella has scarcely courage to be merciful! However, the Norecliffes, like most of our best families, hang together like a bunch of grapes; and the Duke being so dear a friend of Lady Grandison and

her daughter, through *him*, she might be persuaded to assist in patching up the character of poor Stasy."

" You mistake me.—It is not her *character* I want to save,—it is *herself!*" cried Emma, more earnestly. " I consider her shamefully sacrificed by my brother!—For the diversion of an idle hour, he won her girlish affections—only to desert her;—and having *again* idle hours upon his hands, has again—but let us talk no more of it,—for even to think on the subject, makes me forget he is my brother!"

While the family of Philip Askham were thus solicitous on his account, the world, of course, pronounced him a very happy man! The moral excitement indicating, in *his* nature, as in Lady Anastasia's, an indigestion of conscience, passed in society for "charming spirits;" and he was thought a much pleasanter fellow now that, being five thousand pounds in debt and full fathom five in love with a married woman, he exhibited all the reckless flightiness of an uneasy mind, than when enjoying the serene equability of pulse symptomatic of the frigid zone of Eden Castle.

"I cannot think what Askham and Lady Emilia are about!" said Sir Hugh de Bayhurst to his wife, (all anxiety for the completion of the match so long prognosticated, that he might renew his propositions concerning the niece to whom he was becoming daily more attached, and whom he longed to emancipate from the name of Saville, and the nursery associations of Philip Askham's household.)—"Lady Lynchmore, I am afraid, opposes the match?—She has, perhaps, other views for her daughter?"

"Not that I am aware of,"—was Lady Anastasia's evasive answer,—bending closer over her embroidery frame, to screen her guilty blushes from observation.

"You should invite them here together oftener," resumed her husband; "and Lady Lynchmore might possibly be glad to let Lady Emilia accompany you sometimes to the opera, now her second daughter is out,—when Askham would see her unmolested.—I have the accomplishment of the marriage sincerely at heart; and you would greatly oblige me by doing your utmost for its promotion."

Sad encouragement this, to one who needed

none, to have Philip Askham constantly by her side, on pretension of encouraging his attentions to another!—For so demoralizing are the lessons of a world where

On commence par être dupe, et finit par être fripon,  
that the woman who had suffered so cruelly  
from the results of unmeaning assiduities, did  
not hesitate to suggest them in a quarter where,  
for anything she knew to the contrary, they  
might bring forth fruit equally pernicious.

So far, therefore, from entertaining the misgivings ascribed to him by Trevor and Lesly and half the idlers of Watier's, never had De Bayhurst felt more gratified by the conduct of his wife, than at a moment when, in deference to his wishes, Askham was their constant guest; and, in deference to his predilections, Selina their all but inmate.

Day after day, the little girl, (to whom that name is now scarcely appropriate, her stature already exceeding that of her friend Sophia,) was made the unconscious medium of communication between her stepfather and the wife of her uncle. Lady Anastasia, having cultivated her sole accomplishment till she had become

one of the best amateur singers of the day, had undertaken the tuition of Selina,—delighted to afford instruction to a pupil so gifted;—and every morning after breakfast, Miss Saville repaired to Grosvenor Square for a lesson ; little imagining, as she entered the gorgous dressing-room which contained their practising piano, that the apparently unimportant message entrusted to her by Philip, was to regulate for the day the movements of her uncle's house.

The only thing that *did* excite her surprise, was the number of times she discovered Lady Anastasia either in tears, or with eyes that denoted recent weeping!—What could *she* have to grieve for?—she, who possessed all the joys and comforts of this world ;—a surviving mother, whom she saw daily,—a husband who gratified her utmost caprices,—friends, beyond the computation of even her porter's book,—and luxuries such as the imagination of childhood had never dreamed!

Schooled, indeed, by the chaste simplicity of her mother to tastes of a purer kind, Selina was dazzled rather than delighted with the splendors which, in order in the first instance

to defy the competition of Grandison House, De Bayhurst had lavished upon his wife.—She admired the beautiful conservatory, always filled with the choicest exotics, opening from the dressing-room; she envied the simple bathroom beyond. But the toilet, with its dressing-boxes and mirror frame of chased gold enriched with turquoises, and its cover and courtine of old point, appeared to *her* an unseemly parade,—a deification of that whose worship is unholy. A sculptured *bahut* of ebony encrusted with ivory, and the rich caskets of silver medallioned with coral,—of tortoiseshell, agate, or mother of pearl, that adorned the beautiful consoles of *pietra dura*, would have been more in place, she thought, in the drawing-room suite. For to Selina, there was something selfish in this lavish decoration of a chamber appropriated to the solitary enjoyment of its mistress.

Since those days, the luxury of private life has advanced with gigantic strides; and houses and households at that time rare, even in the highest class, are now common in the third or fourth, or wherever riches abound. For during

a peace of thirty years' duration, money must be invested in superfluities, or lie like overhoused grain in mildewed heaps ; and to this minor evil, even Philosophy may reconcile herself, by reflecting on the important public works effected under the same dispensation ; and above all, on the melioration beginning to effect itself in the condition of the lower orders ;—slowly indeed, but surely ;—*more* surely than by the prompt operation of a revolution, which is often as promptly effaced.—For the advantages obtained step by step by the poor, are never abandoned. They experience too much difficulty in fighting their way to a privilege, to recede a single inch ; as in the Batavian provinces, the territory so laboriously redeemed from the sea, will admit of no encroachment !

Sometimes, when Lady Anastasia was in a more cheerful mood, Selina, encouraged by her kindness, *almost* took courage to inquire the cause of the tears which so often excited her surprise.—But the long-anticipated epoch of her fourteenth birthday was at hand ; and she fancied that, after the period tacitly assigned by her mother for her attainment of years of

discretion, she might accost with a better grace, on a subject of this delicate nature, the indulgent wife of her uncle.

Previous, however, to that happy birthday, a great national triumph was destined to throw all private interests into the shade. Triumphant as had been, for some time past, the career of the Marquis of Wellington, our overweening national vanity was becoming somewhat jealous of the series of successes by which the Allied armies were gradually driving back the French to their national frontiers ; when lo ! the battle of Vittoria put new life into our veins, and restored the peacock's feathers to our plundered tail !—

Never was joy more universal !—From John of Groat's house to the Land's end, the country crowded and clapped its wings.—A public fête was organised in celebration of the national triumph ; and to that date may be retraced the recognition throughout Europe of the name of WELLINGTON, as that of the greatest soldier of modern times.

Above all, the Regent was in his glory. England had now done more than her share in

advancing the great cause for which the Holy Alliance was consolidated. The Lion's fang had struck deeper than the Eagle's beak!—It was possible,—(even the most croaking of country gentlemen henceforward admitted it to be *possible*,)—that the combined forces of Europe, advancing upon France on every side, might end in crushing, by their stringent circumval-  
lation, the audacious land which had so long held them at bay;—Lord Wellington being, of course, chief engineer of the triumph,—al-  
though, like poor Percy, he had to go round by Toulouse!—

The triumph of the Tories, therefore, was complete: *too* complete to leave even the weakest of them inclination to assert it. And if Henry Askham wore his laurels with decency, how much more those who, like Lord Upping-  
ham, had foreseen and prepared from afar with perspicacious statesmanship, the glory now shed upon their cause!—The Marchioness, who had shared his uneasy moments in the onset of her married life, could scarcely restrain her joy on witnessing the success of measures, his share in the dictation of which no one so fully appre-

ciated as herself. She knew that he had been thanked by the Regent with all the warmth of private friendship; but sometimes, with a woman's weakness, thought it hard that the name she bore had not the share it merited in the bruitings of the newsmen's horns.

Some such excitement was wanting, indeed, to divert her attention from the increasing uneasiness produced by the revelations of her sisters, concerning the proceedings of Philip. From words indiscreetly let fall by Lord Middlemore, they discovered that his close alliance with Grandison House, by inaugurating him into the Jockey set, had introduced him, if not to the Turf, to its immediate confines;—and his losses on the recent Derby, in backing the field against Smolensko, were quoted as amounting to many thousands!—

“ So that he now adds gambling to his other virtues!” observed Lady Hardynge,—with indignation, when Lady Middlemore ventured the communication.

“ Don't call it gambling, dear Emma!” cried Susan, with heightened colour. “ I never heard *betting* called gambling. Middlemore

*always* bets.—But with *his* fortune and unequalled knowledge of horses, it is certainly allowable!"

"*That* point, I will not dispute with *you*, Susy!" replied her sister.—"But in the case of Philip, who bets with the money of another, the case is clearly indefensible!"

"And as Lord Uppingham informs me [that it is impossible but that France must shortly sue for an ignominious peace," interposed Margaret, "poor dear Percy's release is certain;—and, before the lapse of another year, Philip will be required to give up his accounts!—I dare not repeat, however, all that Henry has insinuated to me on that subject!"

"What need of *insinuations!*" cried Emma, with spirit.—"Is not the truth plain enough, and bad enough?—Philip is receiving five thousand a year for a duty he only half accomplishes; and spending ten,—which he accomplishes only too well."

"Surely Lord Hardynge might remonstrate with him!" said Susan earnestly.—"Philip had always most confidence in *him*.—Lord Uppingham is too much his senior;—and as a cousin,

Middlemore can be silenced without ceremony."

"Do not suppose my husband has waited till now!" rejoined Lady Hardynge, with feeling. "He has, in fact, interfered so often, and said so much, that I am never certain from day to day, whether Philip will ever speak to us again."

On one point, meanwhile, the amiable sisters were unanimous; to unite in protection of the lovely girl from whom their brother's attention was now so thoroughly withdrawn. Three years must elapse previous to Selina's introduction into society. But they appreciated the value of years so important to the formation of the female character; and decided that she must not be left to the charge of servants, or wholly to that of Mrs. Markham.—

It happened that Philip Askham, as well as Lords Grandison and Middlemore, was nominated among the stewards of the public fête about to be given in honour of the battle of Vittoria. Already the Regent had commemorated the national triumph at Carlton House, by an entertainment rivalling in lustre

the celebrated one formerly described ; and be it some evidence of the change of manners effected during the ten years comprised within the limits of our tale, that these festivities, occurring at the close of July, comprehended the whole mass of English nobility, at first described as rushing out of town in the commencement of June !—The fashionable calendar might therefore have computed its dates by an Old style or New, with as much reason as the Gregorian.

Among those most active in supporting the Vittoria fête, and most resolved that its brilliancy should do honour to the Tory banner, was the restless *intrigante* of Grandison House. She had bespoken the august presence of the Dandies ;—she had ensured the golden patronage of the Exclusives ;—and to *her* it consequently appeared of minor moment, that six Princes of the blood, of various politics yet congruent in patriotic ardour, had promised to officiate at the dinner.—But among the minor points which her caprice had pledged itself to accomplish, was that Selina should join with Lady Anastasia the large and brilliant party of what the

Morning Post calls “leaders of the ton,”—which she had organized with the express view of an *entrée* calculated to produce a sensation.

At her intercession, the sanction of Philip was readily obtained.—The occasion was exceptional.—Many younger daughters of the nobility, of Miss Saville’s age, were to be present at the first national fête which had taken place in London since the peace of Amiens ;—and the only difficulty that remained to be surmounted was with Selina.—Not from any pretence of premature wisdom, suggesting that she was too young for such a scene; for the pleasure of accompanying her friend Sophia and the De Lacy’s, would have sufficed at any other moment to render the evening delightful, even had not her girlish curiosity been as much excited as the occasion deserved.

But it was the eve of her birthday,—the birthday so long consecrated both to her heart and imagination, as fixing, by her mother’s will, her childhood’s term. Thenceforward, she was to be a reasonable,—thenceforward an accountable being; or why should that best of mothers have determined that the family papers

were for the future to be entrusted to her care? For months past, indeed, she had thought of nothing else. That fixed idea had distracted her mind, not only from her studies, but her natural rest; or when the long-protracted sleep at length sealed her eyelids, predominated in her dreams. Even in her prayers, she had supplicated for wisdom to fulfil with better grace the wishes of the dead, which were about to be made known by the long silent voice of her mother.

On the eve of such a day, therefore, to mingle with a wild, tumultuous, pleasure-seeking throng, seemed little less than sacrilege.—She did not wish to have her thoughts disturbed from the duties, which, on that occasion, were to reconnect her as by a renovated tie, with the precious mother she had lost.

Useless, however, to remonstrate!—Mr. Askham had decided that she was to go; and to explain to *him* the motives of her reluctance, was impossible. So completely had he forgotten his poor wife, as to render recurrence to her an offence; and when Selina ventured to raise a slight objection to the scheme, he became

so incensed, and taxed her so harshly with ingratitude to those who loaded her with gratuitous kindness,—her friends,—*her benefactors*,—that, unwilling to renew by her perseverance his indelicate reproaches, she swallowed her tears in silence, and obeyed.

When the morning came that promised to so many hundreds a day of joy, a letter was placed in her hands by Mrs. Markham, which, though in her uncle's handwriting, she hesitated to open,—for it was addressed to “Miss de Bayhurst!”

“Read it, my dear child!” said the good governess with a smile of gratulation. “It is intended only for yourself.”

“I had reserved for to-morrow, my dearest niece,” wrote Sir Hugh, “the gratification of addressing you by a name now legally your own, which will serve to interpret in the world your relationship to those to whom, under any appellation, you are so dear. But as the announcement was to have been accompanied on your birthday by a little gift which it would afford me peculiar pleasure that you should

wear to-night, I anticipate by a few hours the satisfaction of begging your acceptance of a trifle that may remind you, I trust, for many happy years to come, of the occasion of its bestowal; as well as of the sincere wishes for your welfare of

“Your affectionate uncle,  
“H. DE BAYHURST.”

So deadly a faintness prevented Selina from extending her hand to receive the morocco case which awaited her in those of Mrs. Markham, that, instead of her birthday present, the good woman hastened to offer her a glass of water.

“And *must* I give up the name of Saville?” said she,—tears falling from her eyes at the idea of renouncing what seemed to connect her with the sacred memory of her parents. “Surely I ought to have been consulted before measures were taken!”—

Mrs. Markham, with the feeling of superiority becoming their relative position, smiled in spite of her pupil’s tears, at the idea of her being “consulted” about what appeared to *her*

a mere question of law; and instead of encouraging her repinings, called upon her to be grateful for a simple but magnificent string of pearls, not exactly like those of the fairy tale “each as big as a hazel-nut,”—but large enough to be almost out of proportion with the slender white throat of Selina. It was as Mrs. Markham remarked, —“a necklace for a queen.”

To the necklace, therefore, in her affectionate reply to her uncle, she limited her acknowledgments. She could say, with truth, that she was grateful. She could say, with truth, that it was beautiful. But when she came to the point of signing herself “Selina de Bayhurst,” twice did she lay down her pen ere she had courage to confirm the change!

When evening came, the simple dress prepared for her by Mrs. Markham had to be laid aside for one of the finest India muslin, enriched with costly Mechlin lace, which was forwarded by Madame Triaud as a present from Lady Anastasia; and the exclamations of delight of old Susan on seeing her thus arrayed, and the involuntary commendations of even the

more guarded governess, established so permanent a blush on her young cheek, that on entering the saloon at Grandison House, where a large party was assembled to proceed to the privileged entrance and places reserved for the stewards of the *Vittoria* fête, a general murmur of surprise and admiration followed the announcement of “Lady Anastasia and Miss de Bayhurst.”

At first, it was supposed to be a mistake.—But Lady Grandison, delighting at all times to be an expounder of mysteries, explained to every one in succession, the light in which Selina was thenceforward to be regarded; and while Lady Lynchmore was lending an attentive ear to her rigmarole, Lord Delvyn profited by his mother’s preoccupation to exclaim with his usual coolness to his sisters and Sophia Askham,—“ Didn’t I *tell* you my little wife would cut you all out?—Did you ever see such a complexion,—did you ever see such hair,—did you ever see such perfect beauty and grace?”—

In the confusion of proceeding to the carriages, he even contrived to enlist himself in the special service of Selina.

"The others will have the stewards to take care of them, when we arrive," said he, in a confidential whisper to Miss de Bayhurst;—"but remember, Lina, *you* belong to *me*! I shall take care of you through the evening."—

Terrified by the presence of the throng with which, even in their reserved places, they were intermingled, she was only too thankful for the protection of so old a friend; and not a few smiles of intelligence were exchanged in the party when Philip Askham, with the white satin bow and laurel-leaf of stewardship in his button-hole, advanced, as usual, to offer his arm to Lady Anastasia; and Lord Delvyn, as unusual, did *not* offer his to Sophia.

If this act of desertion arose from the vanity of being seen to escort the youngest and fairest creature in that brilliant crowd, it was fully gratified. The elegance of Selina's dress,—the gracefulness of her slender figure,—the vivid bloom of her complexion,—attracted so much attention, that she became the theme of general curiosity. While the blaze of fireworks and illuminations rendered the brilliant scene as light as day, and the stirring music of a combi-

nation of military bands into one powerful orchestra, sent its strains into the midnight air, the beauty of that one fair, delicate girl, remained uneclipsed and undiminished.

“Daughter of poor Ned Saville of the Guards?” exclaimed the Duke of York, when Lady Grandison, who was parading on the arm of his Royal Highness, explained the connection with the De Bayhursts of the beautiful girl he was admiring. “The finest young fellow in the army,—a man I loved as a brother!”—

In the unfortunate expedition to Holland, the Duke had indeed enjoyed peculiar opportunities of witnessing the valour of one who had passed away, unremembered, among the crowd of heroic aspirants whose “names are writ in water.”—And the commendations thus abruptly uttered to Lady Grandison, were repeated in the kindest and most soothing manner, when, having caused Miss De Bayhurst to be presented to him, he took her hand in his, as that of the daughter of a friend.

Poor Selina!—Whichever way she turned,—hundreds of admiring eyes were fixed upon her blushing face,—and hundreds of flattering whispers poured into her shrinking ears!

“Lovely, most lovely!—All the delicate transparency of a Greuze!” said Lord Hardynge to his wife, on first seeing in full-dress the fair creature whose expansion of beauty he had watched from early childhood.

“And better still, all the *naïveté* of Sir Joshua!”—added his wife in the same discreet whisper. And the tears that, even in that brilliant scene, arose in her eyes when she thought how fondly poor Evelyn would have prided herself on the modest beauty of her daughter, seemed responsive to those which trembled in those of poor Selina, as it occurred to her how differently,—how *very* differently,—had her own inclinations been consulted, the eve of her fourteenth birthday would have been passed!—

## CHAPTER VI.

Dum potuit, solita gemitum virtute repre<sup>s</sup>it.

OVID.

Les voilà, ces vieilles lettres!—Combien d'entre elles ont été écrites avec joie ou reçues avec angoisses!—Sur celle-ci il y a trace de larmes,—larmes séchés, qui n'ont plus de source dans le cœur duquel elles sont jaillies!

PH. CHASLES.

SCARCELY were the troubled perceptions of poor Selina relieved from the confusion of gorgeous uniforms and brilliant jewels which at daybreak still dazzled her eyes, by subsiding into a restless doze that reproduced only disjointed images of the same objects, when she was roused from her slumbers by the fond kisses and congratulations of her little brother; who had stolen on tiptoe into her room, to deposit a birth-day nosegay on her pillow.

Luckily perhaps;—for even on such an occasion, Susan would not have found courage to disturb her nursling, after her fatiguing vigils, in time for the interview with her trustee, Mr. Moran, which was to take place at eleven o'clock. Official business rendered it impossible for him to name a later hour;—and the last thing said to her by Philip Askham, as she was wearily ascending the stairs after the fête, was,—“At eleven, precisely,—Selina!—Men of business, remember, are not be kept waiting!”

Punctual to a minute, therefore, she entered the study where her stepfather in his dressing-gown and slippers stood expecting her; and where, while the clock was yet striking, Mr. Moran, arrayed in full professional dignity, made his appearance.

Much and often as the affectionate girl had longed for that moment, now that it was come, her heart failed her; and the brilliant bloom vanished from her cheek on extending her hand to receive the packet presented by the man of business.—A single glance having apprized her that it was superscribed in her

mother's handwriting, in spite of all her efforts to restrain them, tears burst in torrents from her eyes!—

But when her first passionate outburst of feeling had subsided, she seemed to recollect herself, and rose in haste to withdraw; when, ere she could bear off her treasure, Philip Askham formally interposed; and, after one of his usual benefactorial flourishes, apprized her of his promise to her uncle that the certificates contained in the packet should at once be deposited in his hands.

A hard sentence for Selina,—who had looked forward with reverential feelings to breaking the seal placed upon those precious papers by her mother, when none were near to note or check her passionate emotions. To be forced to open them in presence of her step-father and a stranger was a cruel disappointment. But the sacrifice was not to be evaded. Her trembling hands gently undid the packet; and the act of submission was speedily rewarded by finding among the first papers that came to light the one described by Philip to De Bayhurst;—a letter, endorsed, in lieu of address,—

" My marriage certificate, and the certificates of baptism of the children." The seal, (the same that closed the outer packet,) Selina, at her step-father's suggestion, was about to break, to ascertain that the enclosures were such as they expected, when the man of the law judiciously hinted that it might be more satisfactory to Sir Hugh to receive the packet untouched.

" Certainly, certainly!"—cried Askham, enchanted that it was in his power to offer a show of service to the husband of Lady Anastasia;—" and as you will pass his house, my dear Sir, on your way back to the Temple, it might be as well, (the documents being important,) that you left them yourself in Grosvenor Square."

The important act of the day being thus satisfactorily accomplished, no sooner had the trustee taken his departure and Selina withdrawn to weep unmolested over her mother's letters, than Philip hastened to his room,—overpowered by the fatigues of his stewardship of the preceding night, and intending to fortify himself by a few hours' rest.

Before half that period elapsed, however, he was awakened to receive a letter from Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, said to require an immediate answer; and the immediate answer he felt disposed to return, after perusing it, was, that Sir Hugh was out of his senses!

The letter was either that of a madman, or of one grievously insulted;—accusing Philip Askham of having made him a butt, a dupe, a victim!—The publicity of a personal quarrel between them being however, just then, of all things to be avoided, Philip contented himself with a verbal message that “the letter required no answer;” and, after cursing with all his powers of execration the insolence he was not at liberty to chastise, he resolved to dress in haste and proceed to Grosvenor Square, in hopes of unravelling the mystery.

Lest Sir Hugh should refuse to see him, for explanations given or received, Philip walked straight and unannounced into the library where he was sitting.—But whatever might be the nature of De Bayhurst’s misapprehensions or the cause of his resentment, the

ghastly aspect of his countenance attested that he was terribly in earnest.

“ I hastened to send you the certificates, Sir Hugh, according to my promise,” said Philip, abruptly,—scarcely knowing where or how to begin.—

“ *Certificates?*”—interrupted De Bayhurst, in a husky voice.—“ You are well aware, sir, that you sent me nothing of the kind!—This blank envelope, superscribed as it is, must have been despatched to me as a mockery!”

It was too true!—In spite of its specious appearance, nothing was contained within!—No certificates were forthcoming!—

“ Better have destroyed the whole packet, than remove the only documents of the smallest consequence!”—muttered Sir Hugh.—“ Why, *why* did you tantalize me by deceptive promises?”—

Philip Askham longed to rush upon him and fell to the earth the man whom for so many reasons he detested, and who, even by implication, accused him of such an act of treachery. But explanation was a more judicious alternative.

" Both the envelope and the outer packet," said he, " were secured by a seal engraved with the Saville arms, which has been in Edward's possession ever since his poor mother's death; and is, at this moment, probably in his desk at Eton! The papers must have been sealed by Mrs. Askham herself when she deposited them in the hands of her solicitor, by whom they were this morning given up. What share can I have had in all this?"—

" You certainly informed me at Eden Castle," observed De Bayhurst,—a little touched by his moderation,—" that you had yourself *seen* the certificates."—

" I saw the envelope, now in your hands, which had every appearance of containing them;—and entertained as little doubt of it, at that time, as when I forwarded it to you some hours ago."—

" But what can possibly have been her motive for sealing and endorsing so formally a paper only calculated to create false security?" cried De Bayhurst, fixing his penetrating eyes upon the face of his guest."

"She may have believed the certificates to be still contained within—"

"*Still* contained?—You are satisfied, then, that they once really existed in her possession?"—

"Why not?—They must naturally have descended to her from your brother."—

"But who upon earth had an interest in abstracting them?"—cried De Bayhurst, —with a glance of implication, to which the scornful smile of Philip afforded an appropriate rejoinder.

"Certainly not myself!" replied he, with self-governed disdain.—"What end had *I* to accomplish in their cancelment?—The stigma of illegitimacy would be as injurious to my ward as to your nephew.—No, no! you must look elsewhere for those who are interested in setting aside the marriage!"—

"My heir-at-law, Lord Llandore, though grasping and litigious, is a man of unblemished honour!"—replied De Bayhurst.—"Nor has *he* any cause to attach importance to a certificate, which, were the locality of the marriage

once ascertained, might be readily replaced.—Lord Llandore is aware that, had it been possible to attack its validity, my father would have done so.”—

“ Surely the advertisement of a reward in the newspapers, might serve either to recover the certificates, or resolve the point in doubt?”

“ Or, if unsuccessful, direct the attention of Lord Llandore to the evil!”—retorted De Bayhurst.—

“ At all events, since the solemnization of the marriage is unquestionable, sufficient search *must* in the sequel unravel the mystery,”—rejoined Philip; “ and if the persons already entrusted with—”

“ I am at no loss to determine what is most advisable to be done,” was the ungracious interruption of De Bayhurst. “ All I have to ask from yourself, is a sacred pledge that, till the certificates are forthcoming not a syllable on the subject shall escape your lips?”

“ A request you might surely have dispensed with, to one scarcely less interested than yourself in preserving the secret!” replied Philip, with artful forbearance.

"One word more, Mr. Askham!"—cried De Bayhurst,—whose feelings were still unreasonably excited.—"It was my intention to signify this day to you, through my solicitors, what, as we have met, I may as well verbally explain; that, since a solemn engagement prevents your acceding to my wishes respecting the guardianship of my niece, and she is now of an age to make her own election, an application to Chancery will intitle her to choose a guardian for herself!"—

"She is intitled to do so without any public exposure of the kind!"—cried Philip,—with spirit,—"for so far from disputing the power I concede it to her with all my heart and soul!—Apply to Selina through your solicitor,—apply to her in person,—apply to her in any way you will,—I undertake to abide by her decision."—

By this ingenuous frankness of speech, Sir Hugh was staggered; for *he* had never heard the often reiterated promises of his niece to little Percy, so well known to Percy's father, that, come what might, they two should never be parted!—

"Accompany me this very moment to Grosvenor Square," persisted Philip,—satisfied with the impression he had made,—“and you shall have an immediate interview with your niece,—alone,—unbiased,—before any influence can have been exercised over her mind!—And should it be her desire to place herself under your and Lady Anastasia's protection, from this very day no obstacle shall be opposed to her wishes.”

Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, however, felt at present too agitated to quit the house.

“In the course of the afternoon, he would avail himself of Mr. Askham's permission.”

And in so courteous and gentlemanly a manner was the permission granted, that it was impossible to part from him on other than the best of terms. But no sooner was the man thus frustrated in his hopes relieved from his detested presence, than his long-repressed disgust burst forth.—Sir Hugh was a man whose iron mask was as rarely laid aside as that of the unfortunate individual who has rendered the word proverbial;—but when he *did* unmask,

the features disclosed were far from prepossessing!—

On the present occasion, there was some pretext for his violence!—Only the preceding day, he had been intitled to flatter himself that the long-coveted certificate securing the heirship of his nephew, was about to be placed in his hands; and the beloved girl, whose change of name purported her adoption into his family, about to become the darling of his household. He had risen before daybreak on the auspicious morning that was to consummate his earthly wishes; only to learn what Lady Anastasia, tired as she was, was eager to communicate,—that, at the fête, between her lovely face and beautiful dress, Selina had commanded universal admiration. She even mentioned the flattering compliments of the Duke of York:—and, however guarded in his expressions of exultation, the mental rejoinder of her husband was—“ Before the day is done, this pride of Philip Askham’s house shall be our own!”—

And now, so apt was he in interpreting the

physiognomy of an enemy, that it was clear to him even *this* expectation was about to be thwarted.

At that moment he felt that “every man’s hand was against him.” “Of what avail, or rank or riches!—Through life, every object he had ever courted, was wrested from him by malicious interposition. He was a mark for the malevolence of his species!—He was the victim of human persecution!”—

Not once did it occur to him to put in question whether his desires or projects had ever regarded the gratification of any human being but himself, or to surmise that he could be the object of just retribution.

All that occurred to him was that even now his eloquence might *possibly* prevail with his brother’s child!—Selina was so mild,—so good,—so compassionate,—that if he threw himself upon her mercy,—if he told her that, in spite of appearances,—in spite of all the senseless glitter of fortune, his home was wretched;—that he was forlorn,—companionless,—that during her brother’s absence for his education, there needed a drop of water in his desert,—

that he wished to lay up store of kindness for his old age by hiving his benefits in her grateful nature,—perhaps,—*perhaps* she might relent!—

And with this view, after hours of reflection and irresolution, he proceeded slowly to the interview.

Meanwhile, Philip Askham, on his return from Grosvenor Square, had requested to speak to Selina for the intimation of her uncle's projects.—But though he sent for her, once, twice, and again,—both by the servants and by little Percy,—no Selina made her appearance!—At length, after a fourth summons, Mrs. Markham was deputed to bring him the excuses of Miss de Bayhurst.—Selina was indisposed, and lying down. It was impossible to send word to her step-father that over the letters of his forgotten wife, she had wept herself out of all possibility of being seen!—

To the governess, therefore, Philip entrusted his injunctions. “Sir Hugh de Bayhurst would arrive about four o'clock, to visit his niece;—and, well or ill,—fatigued or rested,—*must* be admitted to her presence.”—

For once, in the interests of her pupil, Mrs. Markham ventured to remonstrate. Alarmed by the overpowering effect which the sight of her mother's hand-writing had produced upon Selina, she assured Mr. Askham that "it was indispensable the visit should be deferred till the following day; the poor girl being in no state to undergo further agitation."

But Philip was not in the mood to bear remonstrance. Satisfied that the slightest appearance of reluctance to promote the meeting, on his part, would be construed by De Bayhurst into premeditated opposition, and scarcely yet recovered from the galling interview of the morning, he reiterated his commands in so harsh a tone, that it required some steadiness on the part of Mrs. Markham to state that, in the present state of Selina's mind, scruples of conscience forbade her to expose so young and timid a nature to unnecessary emotion.

But her courage was not of long continuance! There was nothing to prevent Philip Askham venting on a governess the rage he had not dared to manifest to the husband of Lady Anastasia. A woman so powerless and defence-

less, must submit to be talked down and frowned into the dust; and he consequently enforced with an oath his request “to hear no more of her conscience or her scruples; or he should be under the necessity of desiring her to indulge them in some other establishment !”

The poor woman, who had two sons dependent on her salary for support, and appreciated no less the injury it would cause to their prospects should she be discharged in disgrace by the brother of the Marchioness of Uppingham, than the grief it would inflict on her dearly-loved charge, could only curtsey humbly and acquiescently, and withdraw;—leaving the Honourable Mr. Askham to hurry off to an appointment with the committee of the Vittoria fête, and forget in the bustle and interest of the meeting, the perplexities of his troubled home.—

For dinner, he had an engagement to Carlton House; and so late was he detained by the committee, that, on hurrying back to Brook Street to dress, he found his punctual coachman already waiting at the door; his lustrous equipage and spirited but well-broken horses ex-

hibiting a perfection of stable discipline, becoming a disciple of the Carltonian school.—There was, consequently, not a moment to be wasted in interviews with children or governess. It was only of the valet who was kneeling at his feet to tie his shoe-strings into becoming symmetry of bow, that he was enabled to inquire whether Sir Hugh had called that afternoon; and on learning that he had not only called, but had a long interview with Miss de Bayhurst, Philip recovered his spirits sufficiently to render the turn of his well-starched cravat a *chef d'œuvre* worthy of Brummell.

Half an hour afterwards, he was exhibiting the graces peculiar to one who passed for the best-bred and best-dressed man in town, in presence of one who was unquestionably the best-bred and best-dressed of princees. No trace of the individual who had insulted an inoffensive woman;—no trace of the individual who had oppressed a feeble child!—All the chivalry wanting in his heart had taken refuge in his courtly bearing. His voice was now attuned to adulation —his smiles refined into gallantry,—his language polished into wit;—for he owed it per-

haps to the excellent schooling and exquisite fooling of Grandison House, that his address exhibited a happy mean between the fastidiousness of the dandies, and the *vieille cour* politeness of the Sandbeck set; which he was able to assume at pleasure in compliment to the stately Montespan of Hertford House, or lay aside, in compliment to her son.—

“Monsieur d’Ascamp,” was the Englishman universally cited by the foreigners of fashion daily despatched to Pall Mall by more hyperborean latitudes,—as “*on ne peut plus distinguer*”—and his charm of manner, like that of all persons whose agreeableness is assumed rather than instinctive, was easily worn with its seamy side inward and its fairest gloss displayed, to captivate the approval of one so skilled as the Prince Regent in the appraisement of superficial merit.

So general was the rumour, indeed, that his Royal Highness had personally attempted the political conversion of Philip Askham, so as to remove all obstacle to his acceptance of a place in the household, that Trevor and Lesly waxed indignant at finding themselves eclipsed

in the cut of a coat, or cut of an epigram, or cut of a friend, by one whose temporary rusticity had, for a time, caused his ostracism by the dandies: and still bitterer were the sarcasms of certain envious upstarts by whom it was the Prince's pleasure to surround himself, (probably for the reason assigned by Pliny for the passion of the luxurious Romans for crystal vases: "Crystallina quibus pretium faceret ipsa fragilitas; hæc vera luxuriæ gloria existimata est, habere quod posset statim totum perire.") But whatever the opposition he had to combat, in the circle where all was hollowness, brittleness, and pretence, Philip Askham was the favoured puppet!

On his way home from Carlton House, he stopped as usual at White's, for a glance at the evening papers; or more truly, to carry off his sheaf of its daily harvest of wit, or glean the bon-mots already current touching the dresses and flirtations of the night before;—the stupendous display made at the fête by the Princess of Wales and her attendant, Lady Charlotte Campbell;—or above all, the detestable taste of exhibiting as the decoration of a *guin-*

*guette* the bâton of Marshal Jourdan,—a trophy of victory that merited more generous entreatment at the hands of a foe like England. The blame of this desecration, indeed, was charged upon the shoulders of Lord Yarmouth, who had presided over the arrangements of the fête; and was supposed to have imported from Verdun strong antipathies against the Field Marshals of France.

On arriving in Brook Street, the lateness of the hour prepared Philip Askham to find, as usual, no one stirring in the house except the valet accustomed to sit up for him; and greatly was he startled to receive a message from Mrs. Markham, requesting an immediate interview. Concluding that, having reconsidered his rebuke of the morning, she was desirous of anticipating his ill-will by giving in her resignation, he felt half inclined to refuse her request at an hour so unseemly; and wholly unable to resist the dedication of another oath to her unwarrantable impertinence.

Her object, however, was to acquaint him with the serious illness of Selina!—So grievously was she indisposed that, in the course of

the evening, the family apothecary had been twice called in; who had contented himself with alarming poor Susan on Master Percy's account by indistinct mutterings of the words "measles,"—"scarlet fever,"—and "small-pox,"—as the readiest solution of a fever there was nothing to account for;—and Philip Askham, at present more vexed than conscience-stricken,—was forced to coincide in Mrs. Markham's opinion that, unless her charge were better in the morning, Sir Henry Halford must be sent for.—

In the morning, she was much worse! Sir Henry was not only sent for, but admitted her state to be alarming with far less ceremony than he had used in *looking* the death-warrant of the late Lord Askham.—The malady was a severe attack of brain fever.—The agitation of mind produced by the approach of a long anticipated crisis,—the struggle of feeling caused by being forced at such a moment into the glare of a public entertainment,—the overpowering emotions arising from the perusal of her mother's letter,—and as the crowning drop of hyssop over-brimming her cup, the being torn from her sacred task to undergo a trying interview

with her uncle,—an interview in which she was compelled to resist first his tears and entreaties, and lastly his reproaches,—had combined to overset her reason!—

For it was with the prayers traced by her mother's hand that no earthly persuasions should induce her, so long as she remained unmarried, to desert her little brother or quit Philip Askham's roof, still recent in her memory,—that she was forced to listen to the alternate entreaties and revilings of Sir Hugh;—to hear herself implored as an angel,—reproached as an ngrate,—and at length, renounced with frantic violence as an object of hatred and malediction!

Poor child,—poor motherless girl!—The despotism of *two* such self-lovers was too heavy a judgment to fall upon a head so unoffending.

Considering that the sensation produced by the fête of fêtes was yet undiminished, it was surprising how much interest the world of fashion found to bestow on the report soon prevalent, that the beautiful girl who had been the object of such universal homage, lay at the point of death! The brightness of Selina had sparkled above the horizon for so short a space,

as to have lost nothing of its charm. As yet, she was no one's rival.—As yet, she had not an enemy.—Her recent change of name pointed her out as the co-heiress of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst ; so that not even Lady Lynchmore could fancy it vulgar to sympathize in her fate ; and as regarded the better-affectioned class of the community, the amiable sisters of Philip Askham wept for her as for a child of their own.

The club version of the story was that the imprudent girl committed to the charge of a still more imprudent chaperon, had ventured when overheated into the night air, on Lord Delvyn's arm, and was dying of inflammation of the lungs; a tale which, having been conveyed like a grain of tares in the beak of Henry Askham to Mansfield Street, afforded a fruitful text for the comments of his mother and Lady Isabella, already scandalized at the introduction of such a child into the perils and dangers of a public assembly.

“ Her illness was a judgment upon Philip ! It was no more than he might have expected,—it was no more than he deserved !”

Not even the tears shed by Lady Upping-

ham and her sisters, could mollify their hearts towards one so young,—so promising,—so endearing,—so worthy of a happier fate!—

The kind-hearted De Lacy girls sat grieving over poor Lina's sufferings and danger, till they all but hardened the heart of their mother; who considered it a proof of sympathy strangely indecorous on the part of her son, that, though every arrangement was made for his embarkation for Hamburg, (with a party of young men of family, who, undeterred by the evil fortune of the lamented Lord Tyrconnell, were about to volunteer in the service of Russia, that they might have a touch at Napoleon in person rather than with his Peninsular generals,) he refused to quit the country, till the fate of Selina was decided. Lord Delvyn was vulgar enough to feel the impossibility of leaving the young creature who had so lately hung upon his arm, in all the brilliancy and buoyancy of youth and loveliness, extended on a bed of death!—

“Many true words are said in jest!” cried he to his sister Emilia; “and I promise you that when I told my father, the other night, there was nothing to fear from the *iska* and

*ouska* Polish princesses he was joking me about, because Lina was to be my wife,—I was more in earnest than you supposed. Three years hence, when, (if God should spare her,) she will be just old enough to marry, I trust I shall be tamed down or polished up into something worthier her acceptance. Not equal to what she would have deserved!—For I have long foreseen all she would become, as surely as that the bud on yonder moss-rose tree will expand into a beautiful rose.—But alas! why talk about it now!—The thing was not to be;—and in bidding good-bye to England, I shall carry with me the sad remembrance of leaving all I love best in the grave!"

When Sophia Askham, judiciously despatched by the dowager to St. James's Square with tidings of a slight amendment in the state of Miss de Bayhurst, was welcomed by Lord Delvyn with transports of joy, it was precisely from the cause which had always rendered her an object of interest to his feelings,—because she was the dearest friend of Selina!

But if such the interest of comparative strangers, what were the surly self reproaches

of her cold-hearted step-father on hearing her recovery despaired of;—what, the anguish of the selfish kinsman who, conscious of the struggle of feeling to which he had exposed the unhappy child on the eve of her seizure, accused himself of blighting the fairest flower that ever grew, and of crushing the gentle nature that contained the germ of a second Evelyn!—What cowardly revenge to wreak on the memory of her by whom he had been disdained!—What treachery to the noble boy whose affections he had won by promises of protection to his sister! But there, at least, retribution would not be wanting.—To Edward, whose attachment was so dear to him, he should have to render a terrible account!—

The self-convicted man had not courage to enter the house in Brook Street, where, from the first day of his niece's illness, Lady Anastasia had established herself as nurse. He contented himself with besetting the door with inquiries,—ten,—twenty,—*numberless* times a-day; and the world, incapable of understanding such deep sympathy in the illness of a child unless on the part of parents, attributed to any

cause but the true one the cadaverous aspect of De Bayhurst, as he fixed his wistful eyes upon the walls containing all that was left to him of the Evelyn of Holmehurst Hanger!—

“I met De Bayhurst in Brook Street yesterday, as I was going to call on Argyll,” said Horace Trevor to Lesly, one afternoon, at Watier’s; “and I declare, he looked as if he came out of the tombs!”

“Or was desirous of sending some one *into* them!”—rejoined Sir Walter. “Askham’s daughter, you know, is at the point of death, from fretting because her uncle signified his intention to remove her from that infected house—”

“Into his *own*?—A curious choice of lazaret!” said Trevor, shrugging his shoulders.

“Well!—I wish poor Askham well through it.—A jealous husband is one of the most dreadful disorders going,—short of the plague! What a *trouvaille* for Knighton, (the Prince’s new Galen,) if he could discover an antidote, enabling one by inoculation to take it kindly!”

“Askham would take it kindly of *you*, I suspect, not to talk quite so loud about his in-

firmities, in presence of such a pair of ears and such a rumour-like confusion of tongues, as those of Hinton Hort!—I wish Watier would write up over his door “ Licensed to deal in scandal to be discussed on the premises ;” for by Heavens, the things said in this room are echoed from one end of London to the other. Old Townsend declares that, if employed to trace out the assassins of a murdered reputation, he should proceed straight to Watier’s!”

The party accused as newsvender of the club secrets, took an early opportunity of sneaking out of the room,—thereby tacitly pleading guilty to the accusation. But Echo was already on the alert; and by the end of the fortnight during which poor Selina’s life was despaired of, the reputation of Lady Anastasia was in danger almost as imminent.

At length, Sir Henry Halford declared that his interesting patient was safe; and on his bended knees her uncle acknowledged the mercy of Heaven, which had somewhat more share in her recovery than the court physician. But he could not at once recover his cheerfulness of aspect; and the stragglers left in town,—the

stragglers at that time *always* left in town till the 12th of August inscribed the letters G.P.R. in coloured lamps over the tradesmen's shops and placed grouse upon lordly tables,—persisted in attributing his hollow eyes and doleful looks, to the influence of conjugal desperation.

On this occasion, Grandison House became vulnerable to the scandal-mongers! Even in the aristocratic sanctuary of the strawberry bed, Mrs. Gwatkins and Mrs. Candours are to be found; and one burning day in August, the Duchess of Sandbeck chose to refresh the fevered veins of Lady Grandison by apprizing her that, while *her* whole thoughts were engrossed by an impending action between Barclay de Tolly and the Prince of Neufchatel, the world was in equal expectation of one between Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, Bart., and the Honourable Philip Askham!

“The name of my niece Anastasia is in every one's mouth,” — added the Duchess; “and unless prompt measures are adopted, I think it my duty to inform you that it appears more than probable this imprudent couple will elope.”

An elopement?—A vulgar catastrophe liable

to be written about by newspapers, and groaned over by servants' halls,—reducing the dear Stasy in whom her pride delighted to the level of all that she despised?—Never had Lady Grandison so envied her daughter the speed of her famous greys, as when desirous to fly to Grosvenor Square, and interrogate her in person concerning the high treason, or low, of which she stood thus heinously arraigned!—

The code of morality developed by her ladyship on this occasion, was perhaps better calculated to “make the angels weep,” than the innumerable “fantastic tricks” by which she had long justified their tears!—

“What *is* this dreadful story, my dear, about you and Mr. Askham?” — cried she, throwing herself on the sofa of Lady Anastasia’s gorgeous dressing-room.—“You cannot be in your senses, dear Stasy, if you *really* think of quitting your husband’s house! If your conduct have made him unhappy, *why* add insult to injury, by making him ridiculous?”

“There are circumstances under which no woman of feeling can remain under her husband’s roof?” replied Lady Anastasia, in a

voice whose hollowness bore equal testimony with her haggard looks, to her sufferings of the preceding fortnight.

“ None in the world,—none in the world !” —cried Lady Grandison, petulant from opposition.—“ A more erroneous view of the case could not be taken !—If dissatisfied with your proceedings, Sir Hugh is not the man who would scruple about turning you out of doors ; and as your being still here suffices to prove that *he*, at least, is content, why injure your whole family by bringing us to disgrace ?—Exposures of this nature, Stasy, are the bane of society,—the shame of the country ;—and *any* expedient, or palliative, or alternative, is infinitely preferable. As regards yourself, such a step would be worse than suicide !—Have you ever reflected on what it would be to leave such a home as this ?—A house, nearly the best in London,—where you have everything your own way ;—the most perfect equipage at your absolute disposal,—(no bore of sick horses such as *I* have always had to contend against !)—diamonds, secondary only to crown jewels ; and the most charming opera-box I know of.

(some people prefer the Duchess of Norcliffe's,—but, take it for both opera and ballet, yours is certainly the best !) a fine country-seat, with the neighbourhood, though indifferent, improving; no children to interfere with your pursuits; and your husband too much engrossed by his nephew and niece, to trouble himself about your comings and goings!—What can you want more, child?—I only ask you, what can you want more?—Is there a point on which your caprices are ungratified?—Certainly not!—I therefore consider it but right to lay the affair candidly before you; and to assure you, as your mother, that it would be the most monstrous ingratitude towards Sir Hugh, as well as cruelty to myself who have always so loved and indulged you, were you to take any rash step!"—

Lady Grandison paused,—only from having exhausted her breath, (for her voluble address was delivered in a single sentence!) But her poor daughter, whose face was concealed on the arm of the sofa, attempted no interruption.

"But, above all," resumed she, "have you considered what you would come to *after* your

*coup de tête?*—I put Mr. Askham out of the question, (though he is said to have the worst temper and coldest heart that ever lived;) but have you ever contemplated the condition of *divorcées* in this moral country where they are excommunicated like the parias of the East?—Or even (for a divorce I doubt whether he would obtain,) of women parted from their husbands?—At court, you would not be received!—The dear Duchess of York (the best-natured woman in the world) does not, for her best friend, overlook the objection!—Your aunt Sandbeck, whose set, the *élite* of the *grand monde*, places her next to the royal family, would never hear your name mentioned again; and you would be reduced for acquaintance, Stasy, to that dreadful second set, of which I have always steered so clear;—people without conscience, decency, or tact, among whom you would be wholly lost!—My dear child, reflect seriously upon this!—Think how we have seen poor Lady Luttrell mope a whole night alone in her opera-box!—Remember the fate of Lady Elinor Lee, whose sisters refused to go and take leave of her when she was

dying!—Some people even carry their prejudices so far that they will not take a servant from a woman living apart from her husband; and that Ayton, whom I found such a treasure, had been two years out of place, because no one would receive a character of her from the Marchioness of Arlington!—Severe enough, you will say.—But the decencies of society are to be respected!—

Again did Lady Grandison pause,—fancying she had made an impression. But only to resume with redoubled unctuousness.—

“With respect to Mr. Askham,” continued she,—“(for however vexatious, speak of him I must!)—how has he *dared* to insinuate himself into your happy home, to ruin your prospects in life?—What has *he* to offer, pray, in exchange for all he would tempt you to abandon?—Did he not see enough of you in the world, without hunting you to your fireside, and exposing you to the cruellest aspersions?—Twice every week you were certain of meeting at Grandison House; and almost every night elsewhere!—Why, therefore, commit you in the esteem of society and destroy your domestic

happiness, by seeking a reconciliation with De Bayhurst only as a blind to his infamous pursuit?—

“*My* domestic happiness!” — faintly responded Lady Anastasia, without raising her head.—

“ You may cavil at the *word*, child,—but its sense, at least, is undeniable!—Ask twenty women of your own condition in life, (for people should be tried by their peers!) whether you have not everything this world can afford, to render life happy; — and nineteen out of twenty, however good their own position, would be glad to exchange it with yours.—*That* is what *I* call domestic happiness!—And as regards Philip Askham—”

“ As regards Philip Askham,” — interrupted the miserable young woman, suddenly withdrawing her pale face from the sofa cushion, and flinging back her hair from her face, that nothing might interpose between her and the mother who was about to indulge in invectives against one for whom she was prepared to sacrifice everything,—here and hereafter,—“ as regards *him*, mother, not a word!—You knew

of my attachment to him.—You heard it from my own lips,—heard it on my marriage-day,—and silenced my wild avowals only lest they should reach De Bayhurst!—You sowed the wind, mother, but it is I—I—who have reaped the whirlwind!—What a life it has been,—what a life,—what a life!—You talk of what it may *be*!—You try to terrify me by the prospect of evils to come!—If you only knew the hours I have undergone!—Ask these gaudy walls—ask this detested house which you prize so highly,—ask these accursed gewgaws,”—cried she, wildly seizing some trinkets scattered on the table beside her, and dashing them to the ground,—“this vile rubbish, for which I bartered my happiness,—ask all and everything around me, what a desolate creature I was, till my wretchedness obtained some sympathy where sympathy was ever dear!”

“ You shock me beyond measure, Anastasia, by all this violence!”—remonstrated the astonished Lady Grandison. “ From me, thank Heaven, you never imbibed such habits of unladylike excitement.—Melodrama,—mere melodrama!—To go through the world with

credit to yourself, my dear, the business of life must be more calmly considered.—Compose yourself—therefore—compose yourself.”—

“ *Oh, mother!*”—was all that Lady Anastasia could utter,—pressing her hand convulsively upon the heart she felt was breaking.

“ I have, at all events, fulfilled my duty by placing your prospects fairly before you,” added Lady Grandison,—perceiving by the chimes of a musical timepiece near her, which most inappropriately interrupted her discourse, that it was near the hour of her appointment at Hertford House,—so as to hasten the peroration of her harangue ;—“ and I now fairly warn you, Stasy, not to count on *my* weak tenderness to uphold you in your folly. Painful as it may be to me, I pledge my honour that I will never see you again, if once you desert your husband’s roof !”—

She went.—She kept her “ appointment;” and within an hour of her ladyship’s departure from Grosvenor Square, where, like the wind of the desert, she penetrated only to leave greater desolation behind, Lord Grandison, who, since his daughter’s marriage, had not

twice crossed her threshold for a morning visit, was suddenly announced.—On hearing his name, Lady Anastasia, anticipating, from what had already passed, the scene that was to follow, was seized with so universal a trembling, that not a step could she advance to receive him!—

Lord Grandison came straight up to her, however, and kissed her affectionately;—then, holding her at arm's length from him, with her hands still pressed in his, surveyed her deliberately,—enabling her also to perceive that his handsome and manly face was blanched to ghastly paleness.—His appearance fully accounted for the incoherency with which, after a moment's pause, he abruptly addressed her.

“ I heard a dreadful whisper just now at the club,” said he,—while his daughter sank almost lifeless on the sofa;—“ and hurried hither, my poor Stasy, sooner than anywhere else,—to ask whether it were true!—I never knew you utter a falsehood, my girl!—I *know* I can rely upon your word.—Yet I'm half afraid to hear your answer, Stasy,—*more* than

half afraid!—Your mother and I never hit it off.—We were not suited to each other;—and feeling I could not make her happy, I never interfered with her.—Poor woman,—it was hard but she should have her amusements, when she always let me have mine.—And I have had nothing to complain of.—She came of a good stock: and knew too well what was due to her own pedigree, to risk the honour of my name; so that, if all were to come over again, I am afraid I should do again as I have done!—But there is one thing of which I accuse myself.—If I let Lady Grandison have her own way in other things,—in *your* behalf, I should have interfered! I saw you always pretty,—always good-humoured,—and was content.—But blood is one thing, and breaking another; and I was bound to take care, Stasy, that you were made what a woman *ought* to be.—I never *did*!—I trusted to your mother!—I was proud of you, and loved you, better perhaps, than I seemed—(being always bothered about one thing or another.) But to be proud of you and love you was not enough.—At least, I feel so *now!*”—

He paused ; and taking out his handkerchief, wiped away the cold dew that had risen on his forehead. Lord Grandison was not the man to make a display of sensibility ; but nature was stirring with painful energy in his heart.

“ And so,” continued he, after fetching a deep breath, “ when a word was accidentally dropped before me just now,—inferring that,—inferring, I say, Stasy, that—that you had disgraced yourself,—I dreaded, my poor child, for my *own* sake, to know more. For as there is a living God, if you cannot look me honestly in the face, I will blow my brains out !—Not because a name is dishonoured which had nothing before to be ashamed of ; but because I could never, *never* forgive myself for not having watched more carefully over the happiness of my only child !”

Ere he concluded, his voice was broken by sobs ; and when the poor delinquent before him threw herself distractedly into his arms, instead of hesitating to receive her, he clasped her to his heart with fervent and reiterated embraces ;

as if, till that moment, he had never felt how much she was his own!—

The tears of poor Lady Anastasia were falling with an unrestrainedness that refreshed her aching heart, when, lo! the door of the dressing-room revolved slowly on its hinges, and De Bayhurst, who, till lately, had rarely invaded its precincts, stood suddenly before them. At sight of him, the colour returned to the blanched face of Lord Grandison, who made no attempt to accost him.—But the readiness and composure of his greeting soon sufficed to prove that, whatever others might be suffering, *his* mind was at ease.—

“I saw your horse at the door, Lord Grandison,” said he, “and was determined to come and beg you would persuade my poor wife to take a little air and exercise. Her devoted attendance in the sick room of my little niece, (her kindness to whom I can never sufficiently acknowledge!) has made her, as you perceive, so low and nervous, that I am most anxious to get her out of town.—For our anxieties, thank God, are now at an end!—The little girl is out of danger; and Knighton and Halford have

just informed me that, if her convalescence proceed fairly, in ten days' time, Selina may be removed to the sea."

Lord Grandison was satisfied. Since Sir Hugh de Bayhurst was thus thoroughly absorbed in the condition of his niece, the estrangement between him and Lady Anastasia threatened no very alarming consequences. The kind-hearted man felt greatly relieved!—The happiness of his daughter might require parental care. Her *safety* was not endangered!

Meanwhile, for once in her giddy life, the restlessness of Lady Grandison had been of service. Her visit at Hertford House had accomplished an invaluable benefit. The following day, Philip Askham was requested by the Regent to accompany to Germany, not in a public capacity but as a private friend, the deputation about to convey to the Emperor of Russia the insignia of the Order of the Garter.

At a chapter recently held, the order had been conferred on his Imperial Majesty; and Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, accompanied by the proper officers, was to proceed to the head-quarters of the Allied army, with the splendid para-

phernalia prepared as a present from the Prince Regent. To Philip Askham were entrusted his private letters;—a commission having no connexion with ministers or polities, and imposed upon him with a cordiality of friendship rendering it impossible to decline.

Even the condition of Selina afforded not a shadow of excuse; for the moment Lady Gran-dison conveyed in triumph to Grosvenor Square intelligence of Philip's appointment, Sir Hugh de Bayhurst insisted, not alone that the invalid should become their inmate during his absence, but, knowing her predilections, that her brother—the little heir of the house of Askham—should be the companion of her visit. The Sussex air, he said, would be more advantageous for both than the ruder climate of Eden Castle; and all parties agreed that Percy would be sure to do well under the fostering care of Lady Anastasia!—

So rapidly was the whole affair transacted, that, before the departure of the deputation from Carlton House for a spot which at that moment concentrated the interest and observation of every country in Europe, Susan and

her two charges were already on their road to Bayhurst.

“ I should be plaguy sorry if I thought Phil would ever take a fancy to Hurstwood !”—cried Lord Middlemore to his wife, (on reading in the newspaper a pompous account of the embarkation of the party, and of the splendid new carriage launched on the occasion by the Honourable Mr. Askham,)—“ for he would be sure to get it !—Phil has only to open his mouth to yawn,—and it is filled with manna and quails !—Were he to cut somebody’s throat, the Humane Society would bestow a gold medal that year, as a premium for wilful murder !—At this moment when, if De Bayhurst were to shoot him, no man could possibly find fault, that unaccountable fellow makes himself head-nurse to his offspring. And though, whenever Phil *does* vote, it is against ministers, the Regent himself manages to patch up a little appointment for him which is no appointment ; —that is, which gives no umbrage to Downing Street, or to the old leather glove which Phil pretends to call his conscience !”

“ Thank goodness, he is safe out of Eng-

land!"—was the fervent response of Susan.—“Lord Uppingham had probably some share in smoothing the way for him; for Margaret has been as anxious as myself.”

“I wish he’d smooth the way for *me*!”—cried Lord Middlemore—drawing on his gloves, as his team was at that moment brought round to the door,—“for the roads hereabouts are as heavy as Phil and his new carriage are likely to find them in Germany!—Come,—tumble up, Susy.—*One* spring, and you’re all right!—Needs must, you know, when your husband drives!—And now, rough or smooth—*now* for twelve miles an hour!”—

## CHAPTER VI.

PEDRO. If he be sad, he wants money !

CLAUDIO. Nay, an he be not in love, there is no believing in old signs. He brushes his hat o' mornings !—What does *that* bode ?—

SHAKSPEARE.

Un petit maître, en vérité  
 Est un être bien insipide ;  
 Son corps est toujours apprêté,  
 Lorsque sa tête est vide ;  
 Ne s'occuper que de son habit  
 Et des cravattes qu'il doit mettre,—  
 Toujours courir après l'esprit,—  
 Voilà le petit maître !—

Dans les arts, faire l'amateur,  
 Parler science et peinture,—  
 Se montrer en tout connaisseur  
 Ignorer tout,—hors la parure ;  
 Insolemment sur tout gloser,  
 N'être rien,—vouloir tout paroître ;—  
 Excepté lui, tout mépriser,  
 Voilà le petit maître !—

Jargonner d'un ton suffisant,  
Toilette, chevaux, et voiture,  
Juger de tout, sans jugement,—  
Au bon sens toujours faire injure ;—  
Chanter,—persiffler,—ricaner,—  
N' être jamais ce qu'on doit être,—  
Et par bon ton déraisonner,—  
Voilà le petit maître !—

BOUFFLERS.

ON Philip Askham's departure, six weeks were assigned by the Regent as the limit of his absence; but long before the nature of his duties admitted of his return,—nay, before Edenbourne had half recovered its amazement on hearing that its representative in parliament had been despatched as star-and-garter-bearer to foreign parts, was fought that memorable battle of Leipsic, which forwarded, as by a seven-leagued stride, the pacification of Europe.

Not that in England its influence was, at the moment, properly appreciated;—for ere Philip made his reappearance at Carlton House, to explain, more clearly than the crabbed details of bulletins, the triumphant attitude of the Allies, and disastrous position of the French, Lord Castlereagh had quitted England with his suite; to represent the interests of Great Britain in a conference that purported to accomplish, by the crooked contrivances of diplomacy, a

peace it was on the eve of enforcing at the point of the bayonet!—And well has that phantom peace of Chatillon,—the most eminent blunder of the Uppingham cabinet, (*“viri magni, etiam cum errant, docet,”*) been designated by after-times, “the peace that passeth all understanding.”

To trace the foreign adventures of the man thus fortuitously reinstalled in the career for which he was originally intended, does not fall within the outlines of a story professing to describe the aborigines of the parish of Edenbourne, rather than the individual whom the French papers described as “Sir Askham,” and the *Algemeine Zeitung* as the handsomest man beheld on Saxon ground, since the days of Albert the Bear;—and whom Tchernicheff, and the other irresistibles of Cæsar’s camp, would have considered a dangerous rival, had his waist been a foot shorter and girthed into the shape of an hourglass.

Suffice it that, on his return to London, the victory he achieved single-handed over the carpet knights of Watier’s, was scarcely less remarkable than that accomplished at Leipsic by the Holy Alliance!—To have heard, even as an amateur, the roar of imperial cannon,—to have conversed face to face with an Emperor who had conversed face to face with Napoleon,

—and to have hobbed and nobbed with those whose very names even the newsmen's horns trembled to utter,—was enough to justify the assiduity with which the fashionable world picked up every syllable let fall by a *quasi* hero, embalmed in the breath of emperors and the breath of meerschaums.

Already the far west was beginning to denounce as frivolous and vexatious, the monotonous impertinence of the dandies,—whose essencing, and starching, and mockery of better men than themselves, could not long supply the deficiency of every manly virtue; and though

Fashion

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma,

had originally accepted them as a palatable relief from the ruffianism of the bang-up school, forthcoming heroism cast its shadow before in the person of Philip Askham;—whose bronzed complexion, assured deportment, and manly growth of beard and moustache, (at a moment when the best chins in England were stubbled,) appeared to savour honourably of the roughness of the camp.

While questioned at Carlton House concerning Schwartzenberg and Wittgenstein,—Blucher and Platoff,—til the very ~~sound~~ of their names

~~sound~~

became a torment to him, the Watierians ventured indeed to inquire whether the black cravats of the linenless and laundressless campaigners were tolerably becoming, or Russian oil really of Russian growth.—But from such delicate investigations, his button and attention were sure to be withdrawn by the tremulous hand of one of the edentated and bald-headed K.B.s, whose red ribands and senility were paraded on state occasions in Pall Mall, in compliment to the Horse-guards; and whose catechism touching the manœuvres of Wrede and the Crown Prince, or the route of the retreat across the Saale, might have puzzled the accuracy of a gazette.

He was, in short, the lion of the hour;—and so pleasant being his position as court newsman to Royalty and trump card of the dinner-givers, he was in no haste to repair to Bayhurst for the resumption of a bondage which, long before he left England, had proved sufficiently galling to his shoulders.

On the plea of an accumulation of family business during his absence, and the urgency of his parliamentary duties on his return, he declared it to be quite impossible for him to leave London. His letter of acknowledgment to De Bayhurst for the harbour so kindly granted

to "his two children" during his absence, gave instructions accordingly that they should be despatched with their attendants to town;—and the heart-broken woman who, though she had pledged herself to her parents that, on Mr. Askham's arrival from Germany, no communication beyond the common civilities of society should pass between them, had fully prepared herself to be at least *tempted* into the infringement of her vow, perceived that, of her honour and happiness, the wreck was total!—

"I fancied that vulgar impostor, Gerainb, had put capillary attraction out of vogue," observed Lesly to Trevor one night at Lady Heathcote's, where an open-mouthed audience was surrounding Philip, as they might have done an Oriental tale-teller or Italian improvisatore.—"Yet you see Askham's Saracenic moustache carries everything before it!"

"So would my poodle's,—if I chose to twist it à la Blucher."

"Byron declares that if Askham goes on lionizing at parties in this way, people will send their footmen to keep a front row," drawled the rival dandy.

"He would do better to convert his popularity into ready money. I am afraid there are no more Miss Tylney Longs in the market.

But Askham is not nice ! One might find him some city widow or an heiress from St. Mary Axe to set him on his legs again. I heard thirty to one laid yesterday, at White's, that the Allies are at Paris before Easter Sunday ! Sad news for poor 'Sir Askham'!—Like Faulconbridge's visage,

'A pops him out  
At least of good five thousand pounds a year.'

"But I thought he was to marry that sixteen-hands-high daughter of Lynchmore's,—as much like an heiress, as her father is like a conjuror!"—

"Did you not hear Sir Robert de Lacy say, last night, that his niece had been engaged these two years to some horrid Irish neighbour at Lynchmore Castle: and that whenever her mother attacks her about the vulgarity of marrying a man with an O before his name, Lynchmore protests that one of the greatest men at the French court is a Connaughtman, and called the Duke of O'Trant!"

"Ay, I remember.—De Bayhurst, who was listening with all his ears, seemed so confoundedly surprised!—Who knows but the match with Philip was made a stalking horse by Lady Anastasia?"—

Very little, however, did these superficial

observers suspect the extent of De Bayhurst's astonishment. The discovery of the groundlessness of his favourite project,—not alone as a bar to his hopes of obtaining the permanent care of Selina, but as an evidence of the deceptions practised upon him by his wife,—filled him with indignation.—If Lady Anastasia had not actually *announced* the match to him, she had certainly sanctioned the report:—and what but an evil motive could be the origin of such duplicity?—Was he, after all, a dupe?—Did a secret understanding exist between her and the object of her early, and as he had hoped, long-repenting attachment?

The thought was madness.—The doubt *must* be cleared up.—But he would go carefully to work.—He had ample leisure to resolve himself both as to the deceit of his wife and the still deeper turpitude in which it must originate.—He had come to town for a day, only to escort Selina and her little charge to Brook Street.—On the morrow, he was to return to Bayhurst; where Anastasia, completely off her guard, might be entrapped into such answers to his interrogations, as would determine the extent of her connivance.—On *that* should depend whether he spent the season in the country; or enabled her to pass it in town with more than all her former means of enjoyment.

Meanwhile, if Philip found cause to congratulate himself on being “well out of” the *liaison* which had excited so much uneasiness at Grandison House, it was the only point on which he had grounds of gratulation.—The disorder of his finances was brought before him in black and white, by the importunate demonstrations of Christmas bills, gathered like snow drifts on a quagmire during his absence; and to complete his perplexity, every successive letter from Lord Askham, announced with sure conviction that the downfall of Napoleon was at hand, and on *this* occasion, his arrival in England would not be procrastinated by going round by Toulouse!

During the last two years, the correspondence between the brothers had received some check in cordiality, from the difficulty experienced by Philip in supplying the unreasonable demands of the detenu, now that a new shaft of extravagance was sunk in the already overworked mine of the Askham estates. But in the glee of Lord Askham’s reviving hopes, this coldness seemed suddenly forgotten; and even Philip, notwithstanding the disastrous plight of his affairs, could scarcely refrain from sympathizing in his brother’s joy at the conclusion of more than a dozen years’ exile and captivity. The

Allies were already within a day's march of Paris; and the English prisoners, who had been removed into the interior for greater security, impatiently awaited, in the barren department of La Creuse, their signal of release!

Already, Philip had ordered the best apartments in Brook Street to be got ready for his brother;—and little Percy, who was prepared both by sire and nurse and governess to charm the eyes and win the heart of the noble uncle of whom he was the presumptive heir, stood at the window all day, in expectation of seeing him arrive by every carriage that stopped at the door. That Lord Askham would come otherwise than alone, had never entered into his brother's calculations. For if *he* were delighted to enfranchise himself from a *liaison* with the loveliest woman in England, only because it was of two years' duration,—how much rather poor Percy; who, for the last eleven, had been struggling against the tyrannies of a handsome termagant, of whom it would now be easy to rid himself by a decent annuity.

Just, however, as he was making up his mind to proceed by the mail to Dover to await the arrival of one who had already let pass more days than might have been expected, since the

memorable one that brought intelligence of the conquest of Paris and capitulation of Napoleon, an evening paper (which Philip was luckily the first to take from the hands of the waiter at White's,) apprized him that, among the arrivals from Calais by the packet of the preceding night,—were—“Lord and Lady Askham and family !”

Congratulating himself on being able to hurry home before the explosion of Copleyan jokes to which this strange blunder of the Courier would certainly give rise, he reached Brook Street just in time to hail, alighting from a hackney coach, a middle-aged man, somewhat bloated in figure and claretty in complexion,—whose locks of sable-silvered so little denoted the brother only a year older than himself, that (the strange-looking curly-eared hat and short-waisted coat of the stranger being evidently exotics,) he decided it to be Lord Askham’s valet, and was on the point of asking tidings of his master.

“ Phil,—old boy,—how are you ?” — was, however, a salutation too English to be mistrusted ; and Philip could only hope that the still older boy whose outward man he thought so amazing, had not penetrated the nature of his mistake !

On being folded to the heart of the companion of his boyhood after a separation equalling a third of their lives, his predominant feeling was anxiety lest his brother should suspect he had been taken for a servant ; or lest some scout of the dandies should have already caught sight of the singular habiliments of the new-comer.

“ But where are your baggage and servants ?”—cried he,—when Lord Askham sufficiently recovered himself to be intelligible. “ Your rooms here are in readiness to receive them.”

“ Thanks,—thanks ! We are too large a party to encumber you.—We have put up at Sablonière’s, as the best place for foreigners. Neither Lady Askham nor the children speak a word of English.”

Again, Philip prayed inwardly that his surprise and disgust might not be *too* apparent.

“ I long to show you my young ones,”—said the warm-hearted Lord Askham. “ You won’t find them perhaps so well taught or so well *ficelé* as this little fellow,”—(patting the shoulder of Percy, who was already established on his uncle’s knee ;)—“ but they are lively thriving creatures, and ail nothing !”

Philip could scarcely repress a groan. At present, comment or inquiry were impossible.

"I should like you, however, to come first with me to Mansfield Street," continued Lord Askham,—whose heart seemed overflowing with the charities of life. "Edmund's at Eton, I fancy,—and nobody at home with my poor mother but Sophy,—whom I left on the nurse's knee! Strange, out of her large family, to have only a daughter to keep her company in her old age!"—

"You will find she considers even Sophia somewhat *de trop*,—for she is wild to marry her,"—replied Philip.—"But if we go now," added he, (horror-struck at the idea of venturing, in the semi daylight of an April evening, in a hackney coach with a man whose appearance would have made the fortune of Liston, in a new farce,) "we shall come upon the dowager just at dinner time."

"And what then?—Though I am hurrying back to dine with my family, I really *can't* sit down till I have had a glimpse of the old lady!"

Philip dared not forewarn him how much his filial sympathy was thrown away:—still less, of the probability that his indiscreet allusions to his "family" would produce a hurricane of maternal indignation.

Too much interested, however, in conciliating

the lord of Eden Castle, to hesitate about compliance with his first request, away they rumbled to Mansfield Street; the musty “straw-bottom” which so distressed the dandy susceptibilities of the Carltonian, awakening in Lord Askham’s mind only pleasant reminiscences of his days of schoolboyhood !

It was *not* pleasant to him, however, to find the subrogate of his honours so imperfectly versed in the family statistics, that *he* had to inform him of Richard’s regiment being quartered in Nova Scotia; and the frigate in which Claude was fighting for his second epaulet, appointed to the Mediterranean station.—

“Gone to dine at Eske Hill,”—was the answer of the servants in Mansfield Street to the inquiry for Lady Askham;—and, little suspecting that such was the answer always given to intruders at dinner time, by order of the dowager, and Eske Hill being out of limit at so late an hour for the extension of their ramble, Lord Askham insisted on carrying his brother back with him to Sablonière’s.—“He had all sorts of questions to ask,—and he *must* show him the children!”—

Respecting “the three girls”—his sisters, (who were now three peeresses, though altered in no other particular,) his questions were easily

answered ; for their own letters had kept their elder brother *au fait* to the number of their olive branches, and the incomputability of their domestic happiness. But on inquiring after Henry, it required Philip's personal endorsement to the certificates of newspaper report, to enable Lord Askham to conceive the present colossal proportions of the self-conceited schoolboy he had left so mere a pigmy. .

“ So much the better,—so much the better !”—cried he, after listening to Philip's somewhat invidious enumeration of the amount of sinecures by which Lord Uppingham had contrived to steady the flight of his paper kite—“ Since parliament chooses there should be such abuses as patent places, why shouldn't *our* family profit, as well as another ? I'm glad to hear Henry is independent,—and heartily glad that he wants nothing from *me*. Because,—though God forbid I should play the niggard with one of my father's sons,—it goes against me to give with a grudging heart ; and from the very school-room, where, as a boy he used to sap under the table only that he might pass for a genius, Henry has always been my laughing-stock and aversion.”

His next query regarded Eden Castle ; and on reaching such tender ground as the clearings

effected within the last two years,—Philip was struck dumb on learning that, in a couple of days, Lord Askham intended to proceed to his château!—

“At *this* time of year,—at the very beginning of the season?”—cried he, in utter consternation.

“What the deuce is the season to *me*?”—was the pertinent reply of the stuffy middle-aged man, in the napless beaver.—“I have no duties in parliament; and you don’t suppose that, after the habits of ease I have enjoyed for the last twelve years, I shall ever be ass enough to varnish myself into one of the *papier maché* puppets of fashion?”—

On recalling to mind the Helen Middlemores of this match-hunting metropolis,—Philip applauded this resolution.

“Besides, I’m all impatience to get a sight of the old place,”—resumed Lord Askham,—from whose memory the opprobrium of the ‘dreary pile’—was effaced;—“and Lady Askham and the children, who have heard so much of it, cannot rest till they have seen Eden Castle.”

Philip was petrified. He had heard other *roués* dignify by their patronymic those who ought to be nameless.—But this daring tone of recognition was *too* audacious.

"You surely do not intend to introduce your  
— *family*—publicly at Eden Castle?"—  
cried he,—with sudden assumption of spirit.

"And why *not?*"—

"Out of deference to the honour of our  
family name,—out of respect to the memory  
of my father."—

"My own children are quite as near my  
heart as my parents,"—retorted Lord Askham;  
"and I consider them a credit to us all."

"But consider the shock which such a pro-  
ceeding would create in the county!—Eden-  
bourne is a primitive place;—the neighbour-  
hood is highly strict in its morality!"

"Curse its morality!"—cried Lord Askham,  
a little nettled.—"Its notions, I remember,  
were about as stiff as its clay,—and Eden Castle  
none the pleasanter for either!—But as my  
wife has not the smallest pretension to be  
noticed by Mrs. Gwatkin, or to notice the apo-  
thecary's lady—"

"Your—*wife?*"—ejaculated Philip, aghast.

"Come, come Phil,—none of Henry's stage  
starts!"—rejoined his brother, struggling to  
recover his temper.—"Don't pretend ignorance  
about what I never formally announced, because  
I saw you had heard from others what it was  
not very pleasant to write about."

" You are actually—*married?*"—persisted Philip,—no longer conscious of the jolts and rumblings of the coach.

" Do you remember," said Lord Askham,—as if he thought this feint of ignorance scarcely worthy reply—" that when my father hectored me so confoundedly about that first unlucky loss of mine at *roulette*, I wrote you word that my family would one day bitterly repent their want of forbearance?"—

" You do not mean that the marriage took place *then?*"—cried Philip,—who had flattered himself it might be a recent act of insanity; and that the "young ones" of whom his brother seemed so proud, were at least illegitimate.

" Not *very* long afterwards!"—was the indefinite rejoinder of Lord Askham.—" On that occasion, when you and every one seemed in combination to harass and torment me, poor Léontine displayed such genuine and disinterested devotion,—offering to sell everything she possessed in the world, (which was not much, poor soul,) to release me from my difficulties,—that I saw where I might depend for friendship; and rewarded it to the best of my ability."

A wild gasp for breath was the only comment of his companion.

" You see, Phil my boy,"—resumed his bro-

ther, profiting by his muteness,—“one must take life *en philosophie*, or *en âne bâté*; and I am one of those who don’t care to be a beast of burthen to so sorry a master as the world.—Situated as I have been for the last twelve years,—exiled, isolated, forgotten,—a secondary object to every member of my family, having to obtain my own property with as much trouble as though begging for an alms,—and with every prospect of remaining a prisoner till my head, grey enough as it is, was white as a ptarmigan,—a man is forced to take his situation between his two hands, and consider how it may be mended.”

“And you thought to mend it by such a marriage?”—faltered Philip, shrugging his shoulders.

“What other sort of marriage was in my power?—At all events, I am justified by the result.—For during a third of my life which would otherwise have been forlorn as Robinson Crusoe’s, I have enjoyed the society of an affectionate wife and children.—And so, my dear Phil, if we are to remain as good friends as we have ever been, (which I earnestly trust may be the case,) don’t talk again of ‘such a marriage’ to one whom it has made completely happy.—I am aware that in this hypocritical

country, where vice is only tolerated so long as it wears the mask of virtue, Léontine and I shall have our way to fight. But I shall think it hard if the first antagonist to be overcome, is my favourite brother."

Philip was silenced.—Already, on his introduction to Percy and Selina, Lord Askham had expressed in blunt but cordial English his hope, that so long as he lived, his brother and brother's family would consider his house their home ;—and with such an example of fraternal warmth, it was impossible to do otherwise than resign himself to the evil now inevitable. Still, the singing in his ears,—the sickness of his heart,—attested the greatness of the shock he had sustained.

Luckily, they had reached Sablonière's ; where, on ascending the stairs together, a tremendous racket in one of the rooms, seemed familiar to the ears of Lord Askham ;—for he instantly opened the door, and announced his brother.

The happy family which, according to his own account, had afforded so much consolation to his banishment, consisted of three uncouth girls, with coffee-coloured complexions and staring black eyes ; and a boy so inveterately pugnosed, that you looked aside lest by mis-

take you should see into his head ; who, though but four years old, was already in dress and gesture, a miniature man.—And though the name of Philip had been bestowed on *him* with a degree of brotherly yearning certainly more disinterested than that which had presided over the baptism of poor Percy, the horror-struck Carltonian contemplated his ludicrous namesake with feelings grievously akin to those of the uncle of Robin Redbreast's famous *protégés*!—A more mongrel race had never provoked his disgust than his nephew and nieces !—

He had not, however, seen the worst of the family. The table was laid for dinner,—including the covers of the four little monsters ; and though, soon after Lord Askham's desire to Ernestine that her mother might be apprised of his return, a shrill voice from an inner bed-room, upbraided him fiercely with having kept dinner waiting,—he was scarcely prepared for the dragon-like female who burst into the room, exclaiming—“*Ah ça,—Hascamp!—décidément dinons nous aujourd'hui ?*”

The next moment, however, he decided her ladyship's dictatorial *brusquerie* to be preferable to the instantaneous dropping of her voice into the blandest accents of *calinerie*,—reminding him only too forcibly of her original vocation, as *soubrette* to a theatre of the Boulevards !

Nothing could be more marked than the difference of costume existing at that moment between even the better classes of England and France. But in a woman like Milédi Hasscamp, exaggerated in colour, stature, voice, and vestment,—the effect produced by such shortness of waist and petticoats, and towering height of bonnet, was that of a caricature.—Even before the first five minutes' conversation betrayed her innate vulgarity of nature, Philip had hardly patience to look at her ; and when she spat audibly into her pocket-handkerchief and addressed the heir of all the Askhams as “*mon petit chou*,”—not even Lady Lynchmore herself could have shrunk more loathingly from a woman so v——r.

Afraid, perhaps, to favour Philip so soon in their acquaintance with a specimen of conjugal termagancy, her animadversions were for the present vented on an absent individual whom she reviled under the name of “Vake.”

“We left Wegg behind at Dover, to put our baggage through the Custom-house,”—added Lord Askham, by way of explanation ; from which, Philip implied that “Vake” must be his brother’s valet.—The little monster, coated and cravatted like a lawyer’s clerk, soon interposed, however, a shrill apostrophe to “Pappah!”—

to inquire whether “Vake” would not arrive by dinner-time.

“*N'est ce pas que c'est bien mal à Véke de flâner comme ça en route?*”—whined Monsieur Philippe; while his lady-like mother added aside to Philip, with a smile of depreciation,—“*C'est que ce petit morveux ne peut rien sans Véke!*”

For that time, Philip escaped without further enlightenment.—But the morrow brought before him a far more offensive member of his new family than the coffee-coloured girls or parti-coloured mother; in the shape of a half-pay captain of marines, a fellow prisoner of Lord Askham, who at present officiated as the MacMahon of his household; without whose aid, neither father, mother, nor children seemed able to eat, drink, or understand.—“Vake” was incessantly in request, and seldom found wanting; and by the time Philip Askham had cast his eyes over the outward man of a species of half-bred English tiger, occasionally to be seen in the Quadrant, or among the chevaliers d’industrie of foreignwatering places, but at that period unknown in England, he was willing to admit that, by comparison, his brother had almost the air of a man of fashion!—

It is scarcely to be wondered at, that the

first exclamation of Philip Askham on extricating himself from this terrible family party, on quitting the hotel, should very much resemble that of the convicted Lucio.

This may prove worse than hanging !

There was not in fact a point of the whole business,—there was not a single glimmer in his own destinies,—to which he could turn for consolation!—He, the most envied, the most fashionable of the idlers of the *beau monde* where idleness is a profession, discovered himself at a glance to be the most friendless and helpless of human beings !

Having reached the confines of St. James's Street in the unsavoury vehicle in which on quitting Leicester Square he was glad to conceal his mortification,—he espied Lord Middlemore emerging from the Cocoa Tree, and instantly quitted the coach to join him.—It was a comfort to chance upon some one really interested in poor Percy, to whom he could confide his vexation.

“ By George, what a bore!—and I, who was looking forward with such delight to his return!”—cried the astonished cousin. “ But one might have expected it.—Percy is a fellow who’s been standing in his own light ever since

he was born!—If Percy had been made Pope, he'd have hampered the lock of the gates of Paradise with St. Peter's keys!"

To Philip's share of the annoyance, however, he reconciled himself readily; for like all egotists, Philip had but a shallow hold on the sympathies of others.

"So confoundedly annoying," resumed Middlemore, turning a deaf ear to his account of Milédi Hasscamp's coal-black locks, and coal-red cheeks,—“to happen just at the moment every Englishman in the land is wanting to enjoy himself!—I've been so merry all day, that I could hardly help shaking hands with every soul I ever saw before, and even those I had not;—and giving every beggar I met, a shilling to drink.—There's something in the word “PEACE” that gets into one's head!—And to be shown up in this way, by having Percy bring down upon one a pack of disreputable adventurers!—By George, I've a mind to accept the proposal Hardynge made me last night, to carry off our two wives to Paris, and let them see the Louvre and all that's worth seeing, before the general scramble, that will be sure to take place,—if only to be out of the way.”

Even Hardynge and Emma, though they looked this mortifying family catastrophe more steadily in the face, had no better comfort to afford.—The glory of the House of Askham was indeed departed!—

“ Still, it is not for *you* to turn your back on him,” observed Hardynge,—after listening to Philip’s vivid description of their new sister-in-law.—“ There is a lower deep than poor Lord Askham has yet fallen into.—The *complaisant* appears to me as great an evil as the wife;—and if we all abandon him, there is no saying into what society he may fall!”—

He even agreed to accompany Philip to Sablonière’s the following day, to be introduced.—But when, on their arrival, they found Henry beforehand with them, on the best of terms with the coffee-coloured girls, the little mannikin, and even “ Vake,”—the good intentions of Lord Hardynge underwent some modification.—The policy of Lord Uppingham’s jackal was plainly apparent,—and the Toryism of poor Percy already exuding from every pore.—He made no secret indeed of his recantation in favour of the angelic government which had loosed his chains;—and on quitting the hotel, the Eske Hill brother-in-law offered to

bet with the Hurstwood cousin, that Henry would persuade Lord Askham to assume, on the first dissolution of parliament, the representation of his own borough.

“Henry is the sort of fellow,” said he, “who, an hour before Strafford was beheaded, would have made a dead point at his proxy.”

“By George, then, I hope the Regent will let this parliament die a natural death!” observed Lord Middlemore; “for unless I’m much mistaken, Edenbourne is the only thing that keeps Philip out of the Bench.—I’m afraid poor Philip is deucedly dipped.”—

“Unless Henry, or ‘Vake,’ or the lady in the chimney-pot hat should interfere to prevent it, I dare say Lord Askham will pay his debts.—He forced Philip up to London, you know, by sending him to parliament; and though his taste in a wife may be none of the purest, he talks like a generous, warm-hearted fellow after all!”

“Lucky that Percy made up his mind to be off to Eden Castle at once!”—added Middlemore.—“Though people are too busy with the state of the nation to take much heed just now of A or B,—better have those little quadroons of his turned out in his own park, than in Hyde.—A deuce of a nuisance for all of us,

the whole thing!—But by the time we come back from Paris, my dear Hardynge, we shall find the physic settled, and the sediment sunk to the bottom!”—

## CHAPTER VIII.

I do fear  
When every feather sticks in its own wing,  
Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,  
Which flashes now a phœnix.

SHAKSPEARE.

O had thy grandsire, with a prophet's eye,  
Seen how his son's son would destroy his sons,  
From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame!—  
Why, if thou wert the regent of the world,  
It were a shame to let this land by lease;  
But, for thy worlds enjoying but this land,  
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?—  
Landlord of “Eden” wert thou,—and not king!—

SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH the various members of the Askham family evinced so little predilection for London, that Emma and Susan and their two lords were among the first who had the gratification of beholding in his triumphant position

in the humbled capital of France, the great captain with whose name its nurses were beginning to frighten refractory children, as formerly with that of Marlbrook,—while Lord Askham was already surveying with horror round Eden Castle the naked slopes and craggy acclivities he remembered clothed with thriving oaks and stately elms,—all England with one accord was crowding thither, to stare at the Allied sovereigns;—who, by associating the valour of their camps, and the gold of their currency, had prevailed against the “Corsican blackguard” with much the same valour of heroism which enables a field of hundreds of well-mounted sportsmen,—fifty couple of staunch hounds, and huntsmen and helpers in proportion,—to effect the suppression of poor little reynard.—

The same unaccountable burst of affection which escorted Louis XVIII. from Hartwell to the coast, after totally overlooking his existence for several years preceding, seemed to attract the British nation to the metropolis, for a sight of those crowned and laurelled heads,—each of which had been in close alliance with Napoleon, and danc'd attendance in his ante-room of kings, so long as the magnetic fluid of victory hovered around the oriflamme of France!”

In the optimism of an hour so triumphant, among the many things that the country called upon itself to be thankful for, was that the Regent should have selected, among those officiating as royal bear-leaders, a man so skilled to do credit to the office as the honourable member for Edenbourne. It was whispered at Watier's that he was recommended for the charge by Madame Lieven; at White's, that he had made a conquest of the Duchess of Oldenburg, who courted him as the favourite of the Prince, with whom she was ambitious of becoming a favourite; and no one chose to remember the self-evident fact, that the Sir Askham, already honoured by the favour of their *Kaiserliche* and *Königliche* majesties, was naturally the fittest person for their service.—It was Lady Grandison, therefore, who, by her eagerness to remove him from England, had laid the foundation of his advancement.

But while the gay world was thanking goodness for its power of providing a noble *valet de place*, whose French was as good as Horace Trevor's, and his bow as graceful as Sir Walter Lesly's, while his name bore citation in the Ratisbon College and was secure against an Uppingham blackball,—Philip Askham,

but that his office afforded a pretext for not accompanying his brother to Eden Castle, would have scarcely found courage to wear with a smile, the mantle of state under which the fox was gnawing.

It was a trial of patience to one whose detestation of noise was avouched by his early persecutions of little Edward Saville, to be beset, whichever way he turned, by the shouts of the thousands upon thousands who so exercised their lungs in favour of the illustrious strangers,

That the Thames trembled underneath her banks  
To hear the replication of their cries  
Made by her concave shores ;

and though the human face divine may be a pleasant study, yet when, twelve hours out of the twenty-four, your eyes are beset by a sea of human faces, “thick as the leaves in Val-lombrosa,” all wearing the same open-eyed, open-mouthed expression of vulgar wonderment, the sight is somewhat surfeiting,—even when the “inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude” and solace of crowds, has something better to turn to by way of refuge, than the contemplation of ruin and despair.—Yet of two evils,—the besetment of that clamorous mob

was less annoying, than the still small voice of conscience, with its eternal balance of accounts,—its sum total of debts to be paid, and sins to be repented.

And though circumstances scarcely admitted on such an occasion of the pleasing delusions of the fly on the wheel, Philip had no small reason to believe that, among the hundreds of thousands whose eyes were attracted to the brilliant *cortège* of the sight-seeing Emperor, the fairer thousands assigned the preference, in point of manly beauty, to one whose person and costume were less at variance with their stereotyped notions of distinction;—and in those brilliant fêtes, where the Lady Grandisons, and Lady Lynchmores allowed no respite to the crowned heads and hearts, (*widowers pro tem.*) from their coquetish advances, hearts less ambitious, and looks less designing, were very much at the service of the leader of the Imperial Ursa Major.—But that his purple and fine linen were lined with a hair shirt, he would have had a pleasant time of it! The Regent who, though his reputation for a discriminating taste was somewhat deteriorated by his pretence at juvenility, (for as Cicero said of one of his friends, *idem manebat, neque idem decebat,*) was still an admirable judge of tact and

taste in other people,—regarded Philip almost as an authority.

White's and Watier's, on the other hand, were too busy in committee for the arrangement of their fêtes in honour of the Peace, to make mockery of the deep obeisances he had learned, in his foreign apprenticeship, to translate into Selavonic. The Hinton Horts were engrossed with tales of tickets canvassed for in vain, or stories of diamonds begged, borrowed, or stolen, to do honour (!) to the royal entertainments;—while Horace Trevor and Lesly visited upon the Prince Regent the partiality he had presumed to show to Lord Uppingham's brother-in-law, by the most caustic comparison of his *pékin* horsemanship with that of the royal warriors, who, for years past, had lived in the saddle!—And amid all this huzza-ing of mobs,—this ha-ha-ing of trumpets,—this trampling of guards,—this prattling of fools,—what leisure for any one to note that the De Bayhursts were spending the summer in the country, and the Middlemores and Hardynges at Paris?—At any moment of a London season, the place left vacant is instantly filled up;—but on such an occasion as the present, the sudden disappearance of a

moral Daniel Lambert, or of any half-dozen Dukes, exclusive of him of Wellington,— would not have occasioned a vacancy.—

As to “Lord and Lady Askham and family,” —things were they of such small account, that their departure for Eden Castle was unnoticed even by the lord-loving Morning Post!—

In the pauses of the graceful courtiership which subdued, as by a surface of oil of roses, the billows raging in his soul, it occurred to Philip Askham as more than possible, that a marriage contracted by his brother under circumstances so peculiar, might be wanting in the indispensable forms; and in hopes of obtaining such information as might enable him at some future period to substantiate the heirship of his son, he applied to his friend Hardynge, to employ some legal agent in Paris, to proceed to Verdun in order to ascertain the necessary particulars.—His experience in the Bayhurst affair rendered him somewhat sensitive to the importance of marriage certificates.—

The reply of his brother-in-law proved chiefly that the original Bob was father to the present Lord Hardynge.

“Nothing would be easier, my dear Askham, than to execute your commission,” said he;

" and I enclose you with that view the address of a clever *avoué*, with whose house my poor father transacted business to his satisfaction, on our first visit to Paris. But if you will permit me to advise in a matter so delicate, I recommend you to forbear.—Lord Askham has been an imprudent man, but the best of brothers ; and here, as elsewhere, is cited as having the heart of a prince.—Do not act with him, therefore, in an underhand manner ; for he does not deserve it. At some future moment, set your doubts at rest by ascertaining from himself the points you deem essential. But do not employ a lawyer to seek out flaws ; for, were I in his position and so dealt with, I could never forgive you.

" I wish you would give me pleasanter commissions, that I might execute them more to your satisfaction and mine.—You can imagine nothing more amusing than the scene presented by this motley capital, (which between its tears and laughter, is in a constant state of hysterics,) unless indeed the mummeries into which poor dear old sober-suited London seems at this moment to be betrayed !—Do you remember once at Eden Castle, when little Saville dressed up your old mastiff in some cast-off finery, the curious figure cut by the venerable beast,—now,

gambolling in its strange accoutrements,—now, stopping short to utter a surly growl, as if ashamed to find itself merrymaking!—

“ Middlemore and I are proud of our sagacity in having withdrawn our wives from a scene of action where the proverbial prudence of English matronhood seem to have laid down its arms. We expect to find, on our return, the Holy Roman Eagle emblazoned in the Grandison arms; and the door-steps of poor Lynchmore’s mansion paved with malachite and turquoises.—On this latter point, however, we keep our own counsel; Delvyn being our constant companion,—amazingly improved, and one of the finest young fellows I ever saw. His exploits at Dresden obtained him from the Emperor the order of St. Anne;—and if it suited him to make the army his profession, which just on the proclamation of a peace (which GOD send to be permanent,) seems scarcely worth while,—I suspect we should hear news of him.—As it is, he spends his mornings with us at the Louvre, or in the Bois; and his evenings with us in listening to Talmia and Mlle. Mars; laughing at our intoxication as little as is compatible with the wild blood of one-and-twenty, when we get drunk with Domenichino or Corneille, as others with Maraschino or Clos de Vogeot.

“The Champ de Mars, with all its dust and drumming, I leave to him and Midd :—and according to *their* account, you must make haste and claim your Conquering Hero, or not a feather of him will be left unplucked by certain English belles who are playing the jay with a vengeance. Our legions must not have to cry like Canidius—

our leader's led,  
And we are women's men!—

“My wife had a dear little letter from Selina yesterday, with a flourishing account of your boy ;—so that we have no questions to ask. Did not a very sacred duty call me to London in August, I fear I should hardly resist the proposal of the Middlemores to proceed at once to Italy, before the excitement which has infused quicksilver into the veins of Europe, subsides into its customary lethargy. *Reste à savoir*, whether the infusion have so renovated the patient, as to render further torpor impossible.

“And now, good-bye. The Frêres Provençaux are extending their arms, dyed in Hermiteage, to embrace your two brothers-in-law ; who, nevertheless remain with their wives, fasting or feasting, ever yours fraternally.”

Accustomed to mistrust the counsel of others regarding his selfish interests, Philip profited by the address forwarded by Lord Hardynge, to employ a legal practitioner in the office from which his brother-in-law recoiled ; and having issued his commission, which it would require some weeks to accomplish, gave himself up with better spirits to the frenzy of the hour. The Askham succession was not yet impossible ;—and by Sir Hugh de Bayhurst's judicious sojourn in the country, he was at once relieved from the importunities of a jealous and repining woman ; and his house from the annoying intrusions of the saturnine uncle of Selina.

Though not a syllable of explanation had transpired between himself and Lady Grandison, there was an air of triumphant significance in her mode of answering, whenever, at the dinner parties which so often united them, he made formal inquiries after her daughter, that “ all was well at Bayhurst, where Stasy enjoyed herself so much, that not even the visit of the allied sovereigns would attract her to town ! ”

But Lady Grandison was too much interested in conciliating the individual officiating as janitor of the Imperial presence, — without

whose cognizance not even a note could be insinuated into the hand of Cæsar,—to utter a syllable at which his susceptibility could take umbrage. So many were the occasions, moreover, in that queenless court, (where the youth of the Princess Charlotte prevented her assuming even the limited authority likely to be spared her by the Prince Regent,) in which the first honours after those of the royal family were assigned to the Marchioness of Uppingham, that the Askham family were secure of deference and conciliation from the politic leader of the exclusives.

To this source of advancement, indeed, Philip himself was covertly directing his aspirations. In a wreck of fortune so total as his own, a man of *his* nature does not disdain to keep afloat, even by clinging to a hencoop; and if nothing else remained for succour, place was a spar to which he might again be lashed, rather than go to the bottom.—The honours of political martyrdom would be an impertinent ambition on the part of one so obscure;—his stand on the ladder of public life being on so low a round, that his head was not perceptible above the throng.—Nay, there was every excuse for his changing sides; since the Regent himself was the leader of his desertion, and the

patron of his borough, a convert upon honest conviction. Unless by the manly indignation of Lord Hardynge, or the jealous sneers of his brother Henry snarling currishly over his loaves and fishes, no chance of his being reviled for apostacy !—

Never, therefore, did his public duties bring him into contact with Lord Uppingham, without his attempting to thaw the mass of ice that disunited them, which he hoped in time to render a confluent stream.—For while the powerful eye of the Marquis comprehended at that moment the politics of all Europe within its horizon, his brother-in-law saw nothing in this world beyond the gloomy shadow projected before him by his single Self, now that every step he made receded further from his setting sun !—

One day—the one preceding the departure of the allied sovereigns for Portsmouth to witness that peculiarly English exercise of warlike skill,—a naval review,—two letters were placed at the same moment in the hands of Philip ; either of which might have sufficed to account for the cloud overspreading his handsome face, as he soon afterwards proceeded to Escudier's for the discharge of his daily duties. Though, in answer to the more than gracious

inquiries of the Duchess of Oldenburg after his health, he ascribed his apparent indisposition (and with truth) to headache arising from impending thunder storms, the electric fluid he apprehended was engendered at two points as widely apart as Bayhurst and Eden Castle!—

For of the two ominous letters, one was in Lady Anastasia's handwriting,—the other, in that of Lord Askham.—Need it be added, to those acquainted with Philip Askham, to *which* he assigned precedence of attention?—

For an explosion of wrath on the part of his brother, he was fully prepared, since a large portion of his indiscretions must have by this time transpired;—and often, when contemplating with disgust the probability of Miladi Hasscamp's assumptions of proprietorship over the personalties there had been as yet no opportunity of claiming, and the innovations of “Vake”—to the extent perhaps of riding his horses and ruining the mouth of Black Muley of Meltonian renown,—he shuddered at the notion of Percy's displeasure on finding how his tenants had been screwed up, and how low the discipline of the estate let down.—Instead of devoting to the improvement

of the property the provision set apart by William Lord Askham for the purpose, Philip had in fact taken care to appropriate every guinea to his personal enjoyment.

There was something, however, in the tone of Percy's letter, more humiliating than crude reprehension.—He spoke of the security in which he had always indulged that his property, and the property of his children, was in the safest possible keeping in the hands of a brother so dear to him; and of his heartfelt vexation on finding, not only their interests sacrificed, but many of his father's favourite tenants,—many whose forefathers had been the favourite tenants of his ancestors,—driven from the estate, often to its injury as well as their own ruin!—It was not, he said, a few trashy modern improvements in the house or gardens, that could reconcile him to the idea of these people being driven from their homes,—to lay their gray heads, at last, in some other church-yard than Edenbourne.—There was a nephew of old Knowles of the lodge, (to whom the early affections of Lord Askham had been attracted in his capacity of warrener,) who had not only been ejected from a small farm procured for him of the old lord at Percy's intercession, but his

goods distrained and his family thrown upon the parish!—As in all despotic governments, severity had been practised against the weak, as a warning to the strong; and if the far-famed breed of Eden venison had lost nothing of its renown, the Eden tenants had lost not only their credit for prosperity, but their former loyalty to the lords of the soil.

“It was my intention on arriving in England, my dear Philip,” wrote Lord Askham, “to assign for one year to your use, the provision of which, for the last six, you have been in enjoyment;—knowing that the sudden suspension of an income, like the sudden stop of a horse, is apt to fling a man head over ears to the ground. But as I find the estate already in advance to you to the enormous amount of £8,700, I cannot, in justice to my children, make any further concession.—The allowance of five hundred a year I purpose to make you, must, on the contrary, be kept back till the surplus of the five thousand be covered.—For alas! between my own imprudence and the mismanagement of the property, I find my affairs in a ruinous condition!—The entail renders it indispensable to lay by all in my power, as a provision for my three girls, who would otherwise be destitute; and Wegg, who is an incomparable man of busi-

ness, and has gone carefully through the accounts from the period of my father's death, with the Edenbourne auditor, has clearly proved that, with the strictest economy, and regardless of all provision for the girls, the estate will scarcely be clear by the time Philip comes of age!—This is a grievous consideration, for one who has been so long looking forward to spending his latter years in comfort, under the shade of his own fig-tree!—

“The large amount of personal property I find here belonging to you, renders it necessary for me to inquire in what manner you wish it disposed of:—your hunters, for instance,—for which Wegg assures me you would obtain a high price in town,—and which I cannot offer to take off your hands, not being able to afford a hunting establishment.—There are also many objects belonging to your son and Miss de Bayhurst, with which my young ones might make more free than welcome, if long left at their discretion.”—

“A regular warning off the premises!—Bag and baggage—cast out of doors!” was the savage commentary of Philip, as he thrust the letter into his pocket and proceeded to open that of Lady Anastasia;—and that delicate handwriting, the very sight of which *once* caused

every pulse in his frame to vibrate, he now regarded much as a prisoner under sentence of death might contemplate the writing of the sheriff!—

His repugnance arose, however, from presentiments founded on sad experience of the style of letter as sure to emanate from a last year's love, as on certain trees, the withered heps of the preceding season to maintain a persistent hold, in spite of the new leaves and new roses budding in mockery around them.—As a *roué* by profession, he was only too well read in the dialectics of such compositions!—"You *found* me innocent!"—"The reproaches of an unquiet conscience,"—"The accusing eye of an injured husband,"—"The home your desertion has made miserable;"—were phrases as familiar to his eye, as to the ear of parliament the used-up classicalities of Sir Robert Peel!—Like a somnambulist in a state of *clairvoyance*, he fancied he could read with his eyes shut the letter of Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst.

He was mistaken.—She knew him too well to appeal to his feelings.—His iron ferule had been too often used in correcting the ebullitions of her fond eloquence; for the sea alone returns to break in moaning surges at Even, against the rock which in the light of Morning repelled its

tide.—She wrote, not to complain or to implore,—but to threaten!—

Weary of her life, unequal longer to contend against perpetual terrors of discovery and the dark hints of vengeance which his recent discoveries had wrung from her husband's lips, she was resolved to bring her fate to a crisis.—

“De Bayhurst knows or surmises all!”—wrote the unfortunate young woman; “and live here with his angry eye for ever upon me, I neither can nor will.—But I have no other home, Philip, unless with *you*.—On that point, my mother has signified her cruel determination;—and on you alone have I a claim for shelter.—I know the sacrifice I impose on you.—I am aware what it will be to have such a cast-away for your inmate.—But you have brought it on yourself.—From *you* the fault,—on *you* must fall the retribution!”—

“That accursed poetry of Byron's has turned all their heads!”—cried Philip,—(about to destroy the letter,—then, recalling to mind the famous De Roos-ian axiom—“never write,—never burn!”—placing it carefully in the secret drawer of his desk, as evidence of the malice-prepense nature of his correspondent's unencouraged proceedings.) “What folly,—what selfishness,—when I have clearly proved to her

that I have no longer the means of maintenance even for myself!—Aware, too, that I am legally pledged to the guardianship of Selina,—to have *her* residing under the same roof with whom, would be an outrage to all decency!—If she is unhappy with De Bayhurst,—(to whom, as far as *I* ever saw of their domestic life, her whims and wishes are a law,)—the Grandisons—by whom the match was made, cannot refuse her a refuge.—At present, he can *prove* nothing, and she is sure of a separate maintenance; whereas by throwing herself on *my* protection, she renders a divorce inevitable, and completes my ruin as well as her own by an award of damages that would throw me into the King's Bench for life!"—

This consideration, which, even in those unamended days of Prison Discipline, was sufficiently appalling, instigated a suggestion, which, though at first repulsed as unworthy, was soon calmly welcomed back by one accustomed to cover with the varnished mask of expediency, the revolting features of many a heinous act.—

Over De Bayhurst,—over the man who possessed the horrible power of driving Lady Anastasia to desperation, and consequently himself to ruin,—*he* possessed the power of life and death.—One word from *him* to Lord Llandore,

and the vital question of the heirship would lie at the mercy of the law!—At all events, the mere threat must at any moment compel the brutal husband to forbearance.—

Had Philip Askham, (by whom the influence of principle had long been shuffled off in the fashionable throng where ties of any kind that *can* be dispensed with are voted an incumbrance,)—remained in habits of brotherly intercourse with his excellent sisters,—with the high-minded Lord Uppingham,—the noble-hearted Hardynge, or even that rough diamond Lord Middlemore,—or had he so much as accustomed himself to the humdrum decencies of Mansfield Street including the Tartuffism of Henry and his wife,—a project of this contemptible nature would have startled him as much as an act of burglary.—

But he lived chiefly in a world where

The pleasure is as great  
In being cheated as to cheat ;—

and in such a circle, the notion of out-diplomatizing an injured husband would be hailed with as much applause, as in the hollow world of profligacy described by Cibber or Vanbrugh. The stroke of Machiavelism he contemplated was indeed worthy the disciple of Hertford House!—

No time must be lost in accomplishing his purpose; for at any moment, Lady Anastasia might rush upon her destruction and *his*. Yet it required some deliberation to decide upon the safest means of signifying to De Bayhurst his flagitious intention, without risking to be crushed on the spot, if in person, or by legal process, if by a threatening letter.—

Had such a project occurred to him at Eden Castle, he might perhaps have shrunk under the gaze of his noble ancestors contemplating him from the surrounding walls: or in the house of God, at Edenbourne, a single glance towards its monuments, the glory of his race, might have inspired sentiments in better accordance with their nobleness. But as it was, his eyes wandered from the files of unpaid bills upon his writing-table, to the tawdry decorations of the ready-furnished “town mansion” so much beyond his means;—till he inwardly reviled, *not* the fatal extravagance whose disagreeable consequences stared him in the face, but *her* whom he regarded as its origin.—But for the ambition of shining in the eyes of Lady Anastasia, at the period when she was the bright particular star to which all his wishes and aspirings were addressed, these follies had never been!—

This ingenious version of his difficulties

hardened his heart to express in the plainest terms to the woman who thus threw herself on his mercy, that, so far from having a home to offer her, he was himself on the eve of becoming homeless.—

“ If you find your situation intolerable,” wrote he,—“ come straight to your house in Grosvenor Square, from whence I will enable you to dictate terms to your oppressor.—Leave home as for a morning drive, so as to excite no suspicion ;—at Lamberhurst, take post-horses ; and before your intentions are suspected, you will be out of reach.”—

“ After all, my plans will probably fall to the ground for want of promptitude and energy on *her* part !” mused Philip, when (under cover to a servant) the letter was despatched.—“ Women can be rash,—but never resolute ; and she, above all, is helpless and inert as a child !”—

Such was his mode of qualifying the devotion with which she studied his inclinations ; and the broken-spirited humbleness with which, ever since she had a weight upon her conscience, she had deferred to every caprice of the husband towards whom, so long as she was blameless, she maintained the utmost dignity of self-respect !—

To enable himself to meet the possibility of Lady Anastasia's acquiescence, he had, however, still a disagreeable task to accomplish :—an explanation with Selina !—For some time past, indeed, the peremptory nature of his occupations had taken him so much from home, that they rarely met ; and for the last year,—ever since her illness and removal to Bayhurst,—a degree of reserve had established itself between them which rendered it easier for him to utter the ungracious intimation he was now meditating.—

“ May I take Percy with me ? ”—she inquired of Mrs. Markham, when summoned to the presence of her step-father.—“ It is nearly a week since the poor little fellow saw his papa ! ”—

But she was judiciously reminded by the governess that Mr. Askham desired to speak to her *alone*.—

His intended explanation was, in fact, such as it would have been difficult to entrust to any other ears than those of Selina ; whose trustworthiness was a point so thoroughly established, that he had no hesitation in committing his secrets to her keeping.—She was at once above all missish curiosity and girlish indiscretion.—

"Ruined?—about to break up your establishment!"—faltered she, in horror-struck consternation,—after Philip, with sufficient circumlocution, had placed his situation before her.—"And *I*, who have been such a burthen to you,—such a wretched incumbrance!"—

"You well know, my dear Selina," rejoined he, a little touched by the gennineness of her tears, "what satisfaction I have experienced in granting you a home.—All I regret is, that, being now reduced to the interest of my paternal fortune of five thousand pounds, (which, being luckily settled on the children of my marriage, is untouched,) it will be out of my power to continue the advantage afforded."—

"But surely," replied Selina, with deep blushes glowing through her tears,—"surely, if your fortunes be thus reduced, by adding *my* income, small as it is, to your own, we might still remain together?—You have no idea how frugal and how industrious I could be!—The humbler your establishment, the better assistance I could render.—I am an excellent workwoman.—To Percy, I could supply the place of nurse or governess.—He is quite my child.—He obeys *me* better than either Susan or Mrs. Markham.—Only try me—and

you will find that, instead of the burthen I have been, I shall become as useful as a servant."—

"Heaven forbid," said Philip, with a smile purporting to be beneficent,—“that I should ungenerously profit by your mistaken kindness, to throw you out of your appropriate sphere. You are arrived at a time of life, Selina, when the position you take in society becomes of vital importance; and it affords me the greatest consolation, in the midst of my own ruin, to know that you have such a home awaiting you as the house of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.”

“Reside with *my uncle!*”—murmured Selina, her tears suddenly ceasing, with the greatness of the shock.

“With respect to Percy,”—added Philip,—taking advantage of her consternation,—“your kind intentions would have been superfluous,—for it is my intention to place him instantly at school.”

“You cannot be so cruel!”—cried Selina,—immediately recovering herself. “So delicate as he is, the most unceasing care and watchfulness have alone kept him alive. He is but six years old,—an age at which even healthy children are seldom sent from home.—But Percy, who is accustomed to the tenderness usually bestowed on girls—”

"The more reason that there should be a speedy change of system!" was the harsh rejoinder of her step-father.—"His prospects are no longer what they were.—And as he will have to scramble through life as a poor man's child, it is time he should qualify himself for his altered fortunes.—I am now about to intimate to Mrs. Markham and Susan, that I dispense with their services. At the conclusion of the session, this house will be given up, and I shall immediately go abroad."

"But I always understood,"—faltered Selina, clinging to the last hope of being able to reprieve the poor little boy from what she considered his sentence of death,—"I always understood from Mr. Moran that, having signed a formal acceptance of my guardianship, it was not in your power to transfer it to my uncle?"—

"*That* your friend, Mr. Moran, shall shortly see!"—cried Philip,—enraged at what he considered a hostile demonstration.—"But even were such the case, nothing can compel me to retain you under my roof; and if you oppose my desire to place you in a situation so advantageous to yourself and so every way suitable, as your uncle's house, I shall simply place you at school.—Consult the advisers on

whose judgment you depend rather than upon mine.—Go and gossip with your old nurse,—or even send, if you will, for the officious Mr. Moran.—But the sooner your election is made, the better.—The state of my affairs does not admit of deferring to a young lady's caprices.”—

Accepting this bitter rejoinder, as it was intended, as a sentence of dismissal, poor Selina withdrew to chew the cud of her cares;—leaving Philip Askham to vent new invectives against the obstinacy and selfishness of the sex.—Regardless of Selina's generous offers, he even denounced her as heartless and ungrateful; simply because she unwittingly opposed an obstacle to his negotiations with the irate husband of Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst!—

As he was quitting the room to proceed to Escudier's for the day's duty, his eye accidentally rested on the angle of old Lady Middlemore's balcony, facetiously pointed out to him as “dangerous” the preceding year, by her son; and a sigh nearly resembling a groan burst from his lips, as it occurred to him that his broken fortunes might be reduced to Helen Middlemore at last!—Twenty thousand pounds down, and in prospect the savings of the stingiest and best jointured dowager in England, appeared riches to him *now!*—

But, alas! in spite of her four-and-thirty years of spinsterhood, and the nose that had robbed her cheeks of their bloom, what chance that even Helen would accept the once courted cousin, whose elder brother had become the father of a family by going round by Toulouse!—

## CHAPTER IX.

Those who, as Tully says of Pompey, are *sui amantes sine rivali*, are many times unfortunate. For whereas they have all their time sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end sacrifices to the inconstancy of Fortune; whose wings they thought, by their self-wisdom, to have pinioned.

BACON.

Lachrymæque decoræ,  
Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.

VIRGIL.

IT afforded some comfort to Selina that Mr. Askham's peevish advice to her to "consult her friends," left her plenary liberty of conscience to address herself to those who might afford aid as well as counsel.

Her first measure was a letter to Moran, the man of business, originally recommended to her mother by Sir Erasmus l'Estrange, who was in habits of constant communication with the eccentric recluse; placing her position before him, and

inquiring whether, in the event of success in altering the intentions of her step-father with regard to her delicate little brother, and obtaining the care of him during Mr. Askham's temporary absence, that kind old friend, who had desired her to apply for his assistance in all the exigencies of life, would forward the desire of her poor mother on the subject, by allowing them the use of Eastfield as a residence?—

“ I possess the same means which *she* found adequate when residing there,” wrote Miss de Bayhurst; “ and under *that* roof, I should feel that there was a blessing on my endeavours to accomplish her last wishes.”—

After despatching this letter, to which the anxious Mrs. Markham offered no opposition, she profited by the departure of Philip on the Portsmouth expedition to hasten, accompanied by Percy whom she now scarcely liked to trust out of her sight, to Uppingham House.—The influential position of the Marchioness gave her great influence over her brother;—and even if unable to engage her mediation, the kindness of Lady Uppingham's nature would afford balm to her wounded feelings, as well as counsel for her better guidance.—

“ What is the meaning of that little asking

face, dearest Selina?" said the Marchioness, whom she found in close conference with the young Duchess of Norcliffe, concerning certain innovations of precedence attempted by Lady Grandison, under sanction of imperial partiality; against a recurrence of which, the great ladies were uniting in phalanx.—

But a second glance at the red eyes of her young friend convinced her that she must wait till they were alone to learn the motive of her visit; nor was it till the Duchess departed, and Percy was consigned to the nursery with his uproarious cousin, Lord Rosneath, that Margaret gently drew towards her the young girl whose heart was evidently charged with sorrow; and, by the kindest interrogations, extracted the story of her troubles.—

"Become the inmate of Lady Anastasia?"—she exclaimed. "Philip does not *think* of it! —I was afraid, poor fellow, that he would be forced by his brother's return to make great changes in his establishment. But surely some other arrangement might be made!"—

Without surmising the reasons that rendered Lady Uppingham so susceptible to the disadvantage of a residence with Lady Anastasia, Selina proceeded to entrust to her, in sacred confidence, the deathbed promise exacted by

her mother that nothing should separate her from poor little Percy; and the injunctions contained in the testamentary letter remitted to her the preceding year, that, in spite of all his professions of tenderness, she should withhold her confidence from her uncle.—For Evelyn had gone to her grave with the conviction that the man by whom she had been outraged would, sooner or later, revenge himself by persecution of her daughter,—in pursuance of the old proverb that "*Chi offende non perdona mai!*"

Accepting these maternal instructions as a fortunate substitute for the still greater objections which could not be communicated to Selina, Lady Uppingham promised to do her best in advancing her cause with Philip.

"Do not thank me, my poor child," said she, folding her young friend affectionately in her arms,—"for it is far from certain that, in the embarrassed state of his circumstances, my arguments may prevail. But wherever or however you may be situated, you will always command the best services and warm affections of my sisters and myself.—We love you dearly, both for your own sake and your mother's:—yet scarcely so much, Selina, as so devoted a daughter and sister, deserves to be loved."—

As the departure of the Emperor was to take place in a day or two, when Philip would be once more at liberty for the adjustment of his private affairs, Margaret was satisfied that she should have time in the interim to consult Lord Uppingham, without whose sanction not the smallest action of her life was undertaken, concerning the best mode of protecting the interests of the motherless girl.

Meanwhile, by many besides Philip Askham was the departure of the illustrious visitors anticipated as a welcome relief. Three weeks of unceasing uproar, pomp, and pageantry, in the sultriest of weather and dustiest of roads, sufficed to surfeit even the most bigoted worshipper of stars and garters, and regality in all its gradations or degradations.—Experience, which renders fools wise, and

—Populumque falsis dedocet uti  
Vocibus,

had convinced the London populace, as it did the Spanish friar, that shouting, like “fasting, is a windy recreation;”—or at all events, like the Irish peasant at a wake, that it was as well to know whom they were howling for. The country, in short, was sick of a surfeit of Kings.

“ Thank Heaven! — A right welcome announcement!” muttered Trevor, with a great

yawn, pushing over to Sir Walter Lesly the morning paper he had been perusing.

“What!—the proclamation of peace?” demanded the Rosencrantz of the fashionable Guildenstern, turning to an account of that high solemnity contained in the paper. “I wish they had been civil enough to perform the ceremony at an hour when Christians are awake; for as I hope it is the only one that will occur in our time, I should like to have been present!”—

“Confound all ceremonies!—We have had enough of them lately to last out two lifetimes!” retorted Trevor. “The sight of an Exon has become nauseous; and I swear I am as sick of the rainbow variety of ribands, as if serving behind the counter at Harding and Howell’s. No, no!—I was alluding to the announcement that the Emperor and his sister will sail from Dover on the 27th.”

“The day after to-morrow.—Hurrah! One had no notion at first what a *corvée* they would become! To see the Utilitarian Duchess wasting her mornings among power-looms and button-makers, and her evenings in mal-practices against the stony heart of the Regent, was really *impayable!*”

“Poor Askham is as tired of his honours as a Lord Mayor,—as deaf as an artilleryman from the eternal discharge of salutes,—and as bilious as a nabob from being saturated at city banquets—with turtle and lime-punch!”

“Deaf and bilious?—Is *that* all he has to complain of in exchange for his diamond snuff-box?—Why, the poor dear Regent has nearly fallen a victim to drinking with the Emperor,—whose Falernian consists of iced water;—and is said to have dislocated a rib by tight lacing, in order to render his portly dimensions presentable between two such very thin slices as Prussia and Russia; besides being nearly harassed into a fever by the impertinent encroachments of Grandison House!”

“The worst part of it, however, is to come!” resumed Trevor. “One may judge by the squabbling the other day in the committee at Watier’s, what it will be when the national piper comes to be paid. It will be Van’s turn, then, to feel bilious and turn a deaf ear!—Old Bull has given himself amazing airs on having kings and emperors feasted at his table. But like the Primrose family after entertaining Squire Thornhill’s servants, we shall be forced to pinch for it, for a twelvemonth! By the way, you don’t happen to know whether Noreliffe wants

a cook?—I have promised to go to him in September; and Lunardelli is on the pavé!"

"Left Askham?—What a confounded bore!"

"*Qu' importe?*—Phil's dinner days are done! and the kindest thing we can do for ourselves is to place Lunardelli where his genius will do itself (and *us*) justice."

"I was afraid it was all up with him, now his Cain has turned up, and *not* a trump!—Conceive Percy, who was such a famous good fellow at Eton, doing so beastly a thing as to cut out poor Phil by marrying something unmentionable, and bringing over a tribe of horrible children packed, Hinton Hort declares, in a hamper, like a dozen of claret."

"A dozen cogent excuses, I'm afraid, for not paying his brother's debts.—I must give a hint on the subject to Stultz, to whom I was rash enough to recommend Phil Askham."

"No fear of *him*! Phil will manage to keep his head above water!—Phil will get something done for him.—There is a famous opening in Hanover."

"His patroness, Lady Grandison, is just now in the black books at Carlton House, which may chance to keep *him* out of the Red one."

"He is too sharp a fellow not to have friends in either camp," replied Trevor. "And

*entre nous*, at the Guildhall dinner, Lady Lynchmore was in prodigious force and prodigious favour."

"*That is a liaison* which, with all our powers of endurance, society would never tolerate!" cried Lesly, with an air of indignation.

"On the score of morality?—on account of her family?"—

"Bah!—on account of her *want* of family!—A woman so intrinsically *parvenue* would always be saying, doing, or looking the wrong thing. With the dear Marchioness, we are sure of the only two virtues compatible with her calling,—good breeding, and disinterestedness. *She* is at once too well born and well off, to bid Prince Hal rob her the exchequer!"

"Did you hear all the Duchess of Oldenburg was saying of her, the other night, to Askham, (who insisted upon it, by the way, that it was a quotation from some French author!) '*Elle possède une aisance complète en face de tout,—un certain chez soi qui ne s'étonne de rien,—un air de tête à part, une indépendance de geste,—une autorité de voix, une franchise de diction,—un accent décidé, une négligence impertinente de mille petites précautions physiques,—une façon d'écouter, de s'asseoir, de se lever si particulière, si entièrement convaincue*'

*de sa perfection,—un ensemble si dédaigneux de tout critique, qu'on est subjugué malgré ses préventions, par le génie même de la distinction.”*

“ I heard her say all *that*. But you are mistaken. It was of Madame Lieven, not of Lady Hertford. I agree with *you*, however, that the Lynchmore affair would be a *ménage, bourgeois à faire dresser les cheveux*. But by Jove! Look at Worcester driving like mad, with a fixed smile on his face, and a rose in his button-hole!—What makes him so beside himself this morning?”

“ Because the Duke of Wellington arrives to-morrow, and his marriage is to follow. There will be a *ménage* for you, the very reverse of *bourgeois*!—The handsomest couple in England!”—

And the most *distingué*! But does the Duke arrive to-morrow? By Jove, I’m sorry for it. I should have liked the lungs of England to enjoy a little respite from their Kaisermania, that they might give a cheer for our *own* hero such as would be heard from Greenwich Hill to the heights of Montmartre!”

Two days afterwards, just as this wish was in the act of accomplishment, Selina, who had been summoned to an interview with Philip Askham on his return from escorting the

Emperor to Dover, found him pacing the drawing-room with an open letter in his hand, in a state of frantic exasperation.

"So!" cried he, the moment she entered the room, "I find you have profited by my absence to tamper with my family, and do me all the mischief in your power!"

"I understood," said Selina, terrified by his violence, "that I had your permission to consult my friends?"

"*Your* friends?—Certainly!—But what is Lady Uppingham to *you*?—What do you suppose my sister cares about you, unless as one of whom I have been weak enough to be the benefactor?—And finely, finely have I been rewarded!—*You* and Edward were always the curse of my life!"—

"Lady Uppingham loved and valued my mother," said Selina, with all the firmness in her power.

"Would she have ever heard her name, I ask you, unless for *me*?—Would any one have heard it?—Cast off by your father's family,—rejected by her own connexions,—but for *me* she would have pottered away a miserable existence at Eastfield!—And would to Heaven she had!—God knows how bitterly I have repented the hour that ever brought us together!"

Selina turned away, — about to leave the room. She was afraid that, if she permitted herself to speak, she might forget herself.

“ No!—You do not go *yet!*” cried the infuriated man, pointing to a chair. “ Since you choose to take upon yourself the duties of a woman, at your mother’s foolish instigation, like a woman shall you be treated. You have chosen to bring down the storm, and must abide its violence! This is the last day we shall ever spend together, Selina, and I desire you will listen with respect to the last words I have to say to you. You refuse, it appears, to accept your uncle for guardian. You have appealed to Moran, your cursed pettifogger of a trustee, to compel me to fulfil my engagements with the Court of Chancery. Nay,—no interruption!” cried he, perceiving that Selina made a faint endeavour to speak. “ And the result of all this is, that you will deprive your brother of his birthright, and prove his illegitimacy and yours before the eyes of the whole kingdom. For, since Sir Hugh de Bayhurst is not to be propitiated by your accordance with his wish of having you reside under his roof, I have no alternative but to—no matter!—*That* part of the question regards others than yourself!

Pale as death, Selina had already sunk into the chair so ferociously imposed upon her.— Worse than what had already met her ear, could scarcely follow !—

“ And now, hear my determination !” said he. “ I have this day accepted an invitation from the Emperor of Russia, which will take me instantly from England.—I am about to resign my seat in parliament,—and years will probably elapse before I revisit this country ; for *out of parliament*, the state of my affairs renders a sojourn here impossible.—Percy will be placed at school, under the superintendence of my mother ; and you, till you attain your majority or a wiser frame of mind, will also remain a school-girl :—nor shall it be the fault of my instructions, (since you *insist* upon my playing the guardian !) if your proud spirit of independence be not broken by the rigid discipline of the establishment in which it is my intention to place you.”

Not a syllable escaped the lips of Selina ; not a resentful glanee her eyes.—After the blasphemies against the memory of her mother, all she heard fell vaguely on her ear.

“ Your preparations, I will thank you to make without loss of time,” said he : “ for the foolish old woman, by whom your insolent re-

fractoriness has been fostered, shall this very day—”

The words were suspended on his lips; for the servant, throwing open the door, suddenly announced Mr. Moran. However unwilling to be surprised in so excited a mood, it was too late for interdiction.

“ You must have thought me very remiss, my dear Miss de Bayhurst,” said he,—“ in not having answered your letter. But I am this moment returned to town. It followed me into the country.”—

The kindness of his address, after the brutal manner in which she had been recently apostrophized, brought tears down the pale cheeks of Selina.—

“ I perceive,” resumed Mr. Moran, “ that the more painful portion of my errand here is forestalled. You are aware of the unsatisfactory manner in which I am compelled to answer your letter.”

“ Had you been able to announce the granting of my request, it would have been in vain!” — faltered Selina. “ Arrangements are already made for me, which lead me to regret that I should have importuned Sir Erasmus with my unreasonable wishes. Pray tell him when you write that—”

"We do not seem to understand each other, my dear young lady,"—said Mr. Moran, taking a seat nearer to Selina. "I was in hopes, from your evident distress of mind, that I was spared the pain of acquainting you of the death of my worthy old client. I left town to attend upon his last moments."

"Then I have lost the only friend I possessed on earth!" cried Selina, clasping her hands, and losing all presence of mind.

"He has bequeathed you that which, as the world goes, will leave you no lack of friends;" said the man of business, with a grave smile.—"Let me be the first, at least, to congratulate you on coming into possession of one of the most charming estates in England,—ring-fence,—land tax redeemed,—and a clear rent-roll of seven thousand three hundred a-year!"

"To *me*—bequeath his fortune to *me*?"—said Selina,—to whose generous mind riches had of late acquired a positive value.—"But his sister,—his nieces,—"

"Have received such legacies as he thought it necessary to bestow.—To make you wealthy, no one has been defrauded," continued he, with a smile; "not even myself, who, as your trustee, am handsomely remembered in the will; while the charitable institutions of Edenbourne

come in for a thousand pounds. Sir Erasmus never lived up to a fourth of his income. He had a horror of becoming a mark to legacy hunters. His experience, as it was, entitled him to declare that were Mrs. Gwatkin aware of his accumulation of fortune, he should not be allowed a moment's peace."—

"But my brother,—surely dear Edward was more intitled than myself to the kindness of our generous friend?"—

"Sir Erasmus considered him too well provided for by his prospects from his uncle, to stand in need of other assistance.—Mr. de Bayhurst has a small legacy,—simply as a token of regard."

"And the Lodge is really mine?"—inquired Selina,—her thoughts reverting chiefly to Eastfield and the chapel.

"From this moment—*at* this moment!—For in consequence of your letter, (forwarded to me at the Lodge, and which, ill as he was, I did not scruple to communicate to your attached old friend,) he executed on the eve of his decease a codicil intitling you at the age of fifteen, (which I believe you attain next month?) to the sole and absolute disposal of your property.—Should any difficulty arise, I am en-

trusted as executor to the will, to make you a ward in Chancery."

This last observation was addressed by a side glance to the step-father of Miss de Bayhurst;—with whom, it was clear from his restraining from a single word of comment or congratulation, she could not be on satisfactory terms;—a surmise speedily confirmed when, after a few irresolute looks and movements, the disconcerted man rose and walked to the window, as if to consult the weather, and muttering the name of Tattersall, precipitately quitted the room.

"From Mr. Askham, you have no interference to apprehend,"—resumed the man of business, as if replying to his young client's air of relief on his departure;—"for I received this morning a letter from him, written in total ignorance of what had occurred, to renounce all claim to your guardianship,—or to speak it more honestly, demanding to be released from it, as incompatible with his interests and engagements.—With your permission, therefore, my dear young lady, I will commence my functions, by placing in your hands a couple of hundred pounds to meet your immediate exigencies;—for I know enough of

you to believe that you will pay to the memory of the friend you have lost, the respect of attending his remains to the grave."

"If you will give me leave," said Selina,—still bewildered and distressed, but in whose heart the voice of affection was still paramount,—“before we enter into further particulars, there is a dear friend in this house whose heart I must set at rest;—for, only an hour ago, we believed ourselves on the eve of separation!"

"Mrs. Markham, doubtless,—who is expressly pointed out by the will of Sir Erasmus as a desirable person to remain your companion, till, some years hence, you select a companion for life!"—

"A still older friend,—my own kind nurse and my mother's!" replied the young heiress, with the first smile which had brightened her face that day;—and permission being granted, her light footsteps soon reached the nursery, where old Susan was breaking her heart over the pale and bewildered boy, to whom she believed her sentence of banishment to convey a sentence of death.

"Come and be persuaded of the truth of my good news, by one on whom you will have more reliance than myself!"—said she, on returning to the drawing-room, accompanied by the

breathless governess and sobbing nurse.—“ Is not all happily settled, Mr. Moran?—Has not the most generous of friends bestowed on me the power of making every one about me content?—Am I not now able to offer a home to those dear friends who, when I was homeless, were so good to me,—so affectionate,—so indulgent?”—And while alternately kissing the hand of the wonder-struck Mrs. Markham, and throwing her arms round the neck of the speechless nurse, Mr. Moran proceeded to acquaint them, with professional but explicit formality, that the child so dear to their love was one of the richest heiresses in the land.

“ If this intelligence had but reached us three days ago,” ejaculated the governess, when fully possessed of the joyful particulars—“ what a world of grief and apprehension would have been spared this poor child!”

“ Best as it is,—best as it is!” cried the man of business, glancing with an eye almost tearful at the affecting picture formed by the devout thankfulness of the faithful old servitor over the nursling who all but knelt at her feet as she wiped away her tears.—“ The gold has been tried in the furnace,—and has not been found wanting!—

As if conceiving her functions to be already

at an end, Mrs. Markham was about to retire, that she might be no restraint on the communications between Miss de Bayhurst and her trustee at a moment so important. But Selina would not hear of it.

"I have no secrets from you,—I mean to have none!"—said she, with her usual candid smile. "Let me only help Susan, who is fretting to be with Percy again, back to the nursery (for she is trembling so with joy, poor soul, that I cannot trust her alone!) and then we can deliberate on what is to be done."

Spontaneously, however, and without deliberation, she addressed Mr. Moran on her return.

"I am quite ready," said she, "to hasten to Edenbourne with Mrs. Markham, as you suggest, for the discharge of my first duty.—Nor will Mr. Askham offer any objection; for he is on the eve of leaving England, and had already made arrangements for me to quit his house.—But whatever steps are now taken, will be decisive.—If I lose sight of Percy,—my brother, but far more my child,—I may never be able to regain the care of him.—My altered situation in life and the establishment henceforward at my disposal, may perhaps induce his father to concede to me what, so long

as I was poor, he denied.—What I desire, therefore, is that Mr. Moran, (for speak to him again on the subject *I* cannot.) will petition that, during his absence from England, Percy may remain with me, having the same attendants, advantages, and comforts, he has enjoyed under his father's roof.”—

“ If I know anything of that father, such a petition will be readily granted !”—observed the governess, in a low voice.—

“ Granted to a sister of his son, having between seven and eight thousand a year at her disposal, but on no other consideration,” added the man of the law,—“ for on every occasion of his life, Self has been his ruling influence.—But how is all this to be managed ?—To-morrow morning, my dear young lady, we must start for the Lodge.—I propose being here with my travelling carriage, soon after eight, when gentlemen of Mr. Askham’s description are usually in their first sleep.”—

“ Surely you might find him this morning,—either personally or by letter ?—You were kind enough just now to bid me consider for the present your time my own ?”—

“ But *where* is such a Jack-a-lantern to be looked for ?”—said the lawyer, taking out his watch. “ He is doubtless a man of many

clubs,—and I might waste the whole day in shooting beside the mark!"—

"I understood that Mr. Askham had business at Tattersall's, where his horses arrived from Eden Castle last night," observed Mrs. Markham.

"And I am nearly certain that he will be at the House of Commons before dinner," added Selina. "But before you make the attempt, dear Mr. Moran, I have still a request to offer that will require your indulgence;—for to have been rich only an hour after being poor all my life, and already a beggar for money, seems unpardonable! I have, however, reason to know that Mr. Askham is in pecuniary difficulties.—He is about to leave England.—If, instead of giving me the sum you propose, for which I have no immediate use, you would offer five hundred, or as much more as you will permit, to *him*, in a manner not to offend him,—in a manner that would seem neither a bribe on Percy's account, nor a mean instalment towards the repayment of all I must have cost him!"—

"I expected no less of you,"—interrupted the man of business,—taking off his spectacles and wiping them, as though he wanted to obtain a clearer view of Selina's animated

face;—“ and I am glad that this request should have been made under circumstances that guarantee me against its being suggested by himself.—You shall be obeyed ;—chiefly because to expedite Mr. Askham’s departure, is highly desirable for all parties.—But I fairly forewarn you,” continued he, with a shrewd smile, “ that for a month and a day to come, you are still under my control ; and for that time, I shall play the tyrant to prevent your wasting your means upon one of the most thankless and barren natures with which I ever had to deal.—The whole property of Sir Erasmus would not content the rapacity of one whose extravagance is solely caused by the ambition of shining in that shallow and shifting world of fashion, whose impressions are as little profitable or permanent, as those on a looking glass.”—

Eager to gratify his interesting charge, Mr. Moran proceeded instantly to the discharge of his commission ; leaving Selina and her joyful companions to complete their hasty preparations for quitting that house for ever.—But till the answer of the man of business arrived to re-assure her mind, not a step could the anxious girl prevail on herself to take.—Unless the brother so dear to her heart and so sacred in

her eyes, were to be her companion in her new home, it would be no home to Selina.

All day she sat listening, with a beating heart, for the knock which she trusted would announce the return of the ambassador; and she would have found courage to encounter even Philip himself, with her petition, if pre-assured that he was in a mood for compliance.—But it was not until evening that, in place of the visit she expected, a letter from Mr. Moran was placed in her hand.—

“Your good intentions have been unavailing, my dear Miss de Bayhurst,” wrote the man of business. “I found Mr. Askham an hour ago, at the House of Commons. But to my great surprise, he totally declined your generous offer.”

Poor Selina!—At that moment, all the glory of her heiresshood fell to the ground! It was not for some minutes that tears of mortification permitted her to resume the perusal of the letter.

“I fancy I can trace his disinterestedness,” continued Moran,—“to the fact (announced by this evening’s papers) that the sale of his stud at Tattersall’s has realized a sum of nearly two thousand pounds.—But no matter.—He declines, though not ungraciously, your proposal.—

“ With respect to the child, he is content to leave him with his attendant in your hands; and I am consequently writing from Long Acre,—where I have just secured a substantial landau for your family ark, in place of my not very roomy chariot. The trunks, &c., will reach you with this letter; and to-morrow at eight A.M. precisely, I shall be in Brook Street;—remaining, till then,

“ Your faithful humble servant,  
“ JOHN MORAN.”

The lawyer evidently considered the gift of five hundred pounds, the only important part of his embassy!—

All now was joyful preparation.—Except by Selina, the melancholy purport of the journey seemed altogether overlooked.—But though her friends exulted in her good fortune, in the depths of *her* gentle heart there was room, not only for thankfulness to Heaven for her marvellous reverse of fortune, but for respectful gratitude to the memory of the dead.—

Very hurried, but very awkward, was the parting interview between her and her step-father.—Judiciously enough, Philip contrived to return home only so short a time before her usual hour of retiring to rest, that, Percy being

already asleep, was spared his father's cold farewell; while a few incoherent *phrases d'usage*, sufficed for his adieux to herself and Mrs. Markham.—

Among other things, he asked for her commands to the Hardynge and Middlemores.—

“ On the following day he was off for Paris, as the first station of a much longer tour,—He thought, indeed, of obtaining an appointment abroad.—If she wrote, it must be under cover to Lady Uppingham, who would always be in possession of his address.”

And thus, they parted;—their mutual embarrassment and inward emotion concealed under the well-bred semblance of indifference.—It was only when Selina had reached the door for departure, and felt that she was losing sight, perhaps for ever, of one with whom so large a portion of her life had been spent, that the charities of her nature induced her to pause a moment, for the reiteration of her warm and grateful thanks for his allowing her the care of Percy.

“ He will be the first object of my life,” said she.—“ He will be to me, what he has ever been,—a sacred bequest from my mother.”

“ I have no anxiety on his account,” replied Philip, abruptly,—impatient to terminate the

awkward interview. “Though he might almost as well be without a father, poor child, I am satisfied he will never want a friend !”

The following evening, just as in the dewy stillness of a June twilight the little caravan under the charge of Mr. Moran came within view of Upton, where they were to spend the night,—just as Philip Askham was swearing at the claret of the York Hotel at Dover, from whence he was to depart in the Calais packet at the turn of the tide,—and just as every mechanic in the metropolis was throwing up his cap on learning the arrival of the Duke of Wellington, with the circulation of his want-thinned blood hurried by eagerness to look on the face of one by whom the fame of Old England had been so gloriously upheld,—a letter was brought to Brook Street, which the messenger insisted required an immediate answer.—Nothing would convince her,—(for it was a woman,)—that the family could have left town,—that the servants were paid off,—that the house was about to be given up.

“Mr. Askham, at least, had not left town. She *must* speak to Mr. Askham !”

Her incredulity, great as it was, did not, however, equal that of her employer, when, half an hour afterwards, Lady Anastasia her-

self, plainly dressed and closely veiled, made her appearance ; to whom, as to a near relative of Miss de Bayhurst, further particulars were afforded.

“ The governess, with the young lady and gentleman, had left town for Edenbourne.—Mr. Askham was gone abroad.”

Such was the mode in which the false one accomplished his promise of meeting her in town !—

The following day, however, the unhappy woman, (after a sleepless night in her dreary home in Grosvenor Square, distracted by the conviction that she had been decoyed to London only to afford a last tribute to the vanity of Philip !) was almost disposed to wish that he *had* quitted England without further thought of her, as she was at first tempted to suppose.—For the letter that reached her by the Dover post, placing at her disposal the fatal secret of the disputable legitimacy of Edward and Selina, as an instrument by which she might dictate advantageous terms of separation to her husband,—filled her with indignation and disgust.

“ Injure those poor defenceless orphans ?—Never,—never !”—cried she,—flinging aside the letter,—and covering her face with her hands for shame at being so poorly interpreted.

"And for this despicable being," murmured she,—"who deserts me in my hour of misery,—and would degrade me to still further guilt,—have I sacrificed my home, my family, my self-respect, and every hope of happiness or pardon—here and hereafter!"

While all was joy and triumph throughout the exulting city of London, in honour of the Hero at length restored to its prayers,—she,—the fallen one,—the dishonoured idol of so many hearts,—remained weeping, friendless, and alone;—scarcely daring to raise her eyes,—scarcely daring to interrogate her heart:—the past, the present, the future, presenting one dreary blank!—Abide in that house the coming of her infuriated husband, she dared not.—But where else could she look for shelter?—*Who* would afford a resting-place to the sole of her foot?—In that hour of feasting, what threshold might she presume to cross with the ashes of shame upon her head?—

It was not till after the lapse of many miserable hours, that a ray of hope presented itself to her humbled spirit.—She had indeed sinned against heaven:—but there was one who had been ever merciful.—At *his* feet she might not humble herself in vain!—*His* protection might still be vouchsafed her.—She would "arise and go to her father!"—

## CHAPTER X.

Had I to good advice but harkit,  
I might by this ha'e led a markit,  
Or struttit to a bank, and clarkit  
                My cash account;  
While here, half-mad,—half-fed,—half-sarkit,  
                Is a' the amount!

BURNS.

PAUL. Would you not deem it breath'd, and that those veins  
Did verily bear blood?

POL. Masterly done !  
The very life seems warm upon the lip !

LEON. The fixure of his eye has motion in't  
As we were mock'd with art!

SHAKSPEARE.

"AND so the little hussy is an heiress after all!"—cried Lord Hardynge, after listening with the warmest interest to the flourishing off-hand account given by Philip to his sisters, on his arrival in Paris, of Selina's unexpected inheritance,—which was welcomed by both

Emma and Susan almost with tears of joy.—  
“ I never was better pleased !”

“ ‘Twas the only thing she wanted,” cried Lord Middlemore, “ to make her a wife for a prince.”

“ Or happy without one !” added Lady Hardynge.

“ Never was there a little creature more highly gifted,” resumed her husband. “ To borrow the words of Bacon, Selina possesses the beauty which is exterior virtue,—and the virtue which is internal beauty.”

“ Which means, I take it, that she is as good as she is pretty, and as pretty as she is good,” observed the more plainly spoken Middlemore.

“ Had you the least idea, Emma,” said Philip,—addressing his sister,—“ that the wretched-looking old creature, Sir Erasmus, was a man of such considerable fortune ?”

“ I never trouble myself about the fortune of those in whom I am not personally interested,”—replied Lady Hardynge. “ But I remember that, when poor dear Evelyn refused him, he offered to settle eight thousand a year on her and her children.”

“ Which, Heaven knows, it would have been more prudent had she accepted !”—rejoined Philip with a sigh.—“ However, the greater

part of it has, after all, devolved upon Selina, who is now independent as a queen.—Fortunate enough for me,—at a moment when my projected visit to St. Petersburg rendered it desirable that my hands should be disengaged.”

“ Not one of us but would have been glad to take charge of her for you, dear Philip, and of Percy too !” interrupted his sister Susan.—“ It would be like possessing the spirit of peace in one’s house, to have the care of Selina !”—

By the little family circle assembled in Paris, the news of Miss de Bayhurst’s good fortune was, in fact, received as though it regarded one of themselves. Every one agreed that a stroke of luck could not have fallen on more propitious ground.

But if every one agreed on *that* point, all were not unanimous in satisfaction.—Lord Delvyn, who had hitherto been the life and soul of their pleasures and excursions, now moped away from them, morning after morning, for a solitary ride in the Bois;—or was heard of, defying in one of those Seine water-tubs, mis-called boats, the Morgue or the *filets de St. Cloud*; rowing as if he had a mind to be drowned,—or riding as if he had a mind to break his neck !

Philip Askham, on noticing the change, ascribed it to ill-luck at the *Salon*;—Lord Hardynge, who was himself half in love with Mademoiselle Mars, to some boyish passion of the *coulisses*; while Lord Middlemore was of opinion that, whatever might be the cause of his temporary insanity, “it was no excuse for spoiling a horse’s mouth, by his present confounded mode of riding!”—Delvyn, however, kept his own counsel! It was only to himself he confided his vexation at having lost all hope of his little wife.

“I looked upon Selina to be as much my own, as one of my sisters!”—was his secret meditation, as he pulled against the green waves breaking round the reach of Marly.—“It was the delight of my life to think how happy I should make her, by indulging all her whims and fancies; she, who has been kept in by such a deuced hard hand as Philip Askham’s!—She used to accuse me, dear child, of being a bear;—and all my object here in studying French, (like a schoolboy or an ass as I am,) and dawdling about with Hardynge trying to acquire a taste for the pursuits she fancies, was with the hope of becoming what might please her, a year or two hence!—But now that she is an heiress,—now that all my

pains will be ascribed to interested motives,—I would sooner shoot myself than follow up my intentions!"

When the post brought news from England, he was the most eager of the party in hoping that the letters of one or other of the Askham family might contain further accounts of the young heiress's proceedings. But those of Lady Uppingham were full of the Duke of Wellington,—the fêtes offered to him,—the public thanksgiving at St. Paul's, in which he had so large a portion;—and, above all, the popular enthusiasm that beset him wherever he appeared.

"I dare say Philip will have acquainted you," wrote she, "of the great things we attempted for the Emperor. But all was then show and surface, compared with the heart's-core enthusiasm which is now everywhere manifest! I, who look upon the Duke as Uppingham's friend,—as the general of his choice, and the object of his undeviating support in the cabinet,—can scarcely restrain my feelings in witnessing those of the country."

Lord Delvyn had the greatest respect for her ladyship's feelings; but he would rather she had written about Selina!

Nor were the other members of the family

more communicative.—With Eden Castle, the sisters had no intercourse.—Lord Askham resented in surly silence their tacit avoidance of all recognition of his wife; and Henry was making considerably too long speeches in the House of Commons, to have leisure for writing even the shortest of letters.—Except, indeed, to his elder brother!—To the noble patron of Edenbourne, he had communicated at some length his satisfaction at hearing that, the following session, the representative of his borough would be numbered among the supporters of the most triumphant of governments; for that it had broken its head by running against a stone wall in America,—or been bullied by Catholic committees, in the case of O'Connell's crusade against the rescript of Quarantotti,—he discreetly left out of the question!

Adverting, however, to the former ungrateful conduct of Philip towards Lord Uppingham, and citing the opinion of Cicero, (to a man more familiar with the opinions of Pigault Le Brun,) that “*Omne dixeris male dictum cum ingratum hominem dixeris,*”—he admitted that he was a little surprised to learn that Lord Askham had found reason to complain of the liberties taken with his property during his absence; but he sincerely hoped that his mis-

guided brother might live to see the error of his ways ; a sanctimonious epistle, which Captain Wegg, foreseeing that the plausible writer would sooner or later become a leading administrator of the affairs of the nation, declared to be deserving of print, and begged from his noble patron to lay aside among his autographs.

Even from his own family, Lord Delvyn heard no more about Selina than he already knew,—that she had succeeded to a splendid fortune and gone down to Edenbourne to bury her benefactor and take possession of her estates.—For the London season had so prolonged itself, as to detain Lord and Lady Lynchmore unreasonably late in town : and the unpleasant change of proprietorship at Eden Castle, determined them to adhere to the system so much advocated by their son, of passing the alternate autumns in Ireland ;—the more essential on the present occasion, because, on her attainment of years of discretion in January, Lady Emilia was to give her hand, where from childhood she had given her heart, to Sir Cornelius O'Flynn, of Flynnstown Castle ; and to hear the abhorrent tone in which Lady Lynchmore pronounced the name of the said “Sir Cornelius O'Flynn, of Flynnstown

Castle," might have convulsed a settlement of Hernhutters with laughter !

And yet, Sir Cornelius O'Flynn, of Flynn's-town Castle, was descended from O'Neal, King of Ireland, of the blood royal of Herimon, and far-away cousin to Alexander the Great :—while, to save her life, the lofty Countess would not have known where to look for a grandfather, unless in the London Tradesmen's directory !

The only correspondent who imparted to the little circle at the Hotel de la Terrasse any *real* tidings of Edenbourne, was Sophia Askham.—How they were acquired, it was impossible to say :—clearly not from Selina herself, though so warm a friendship united them :—for not a syllable but redounded to the honour of the young heiress, the last person on earth to make much of her good actions.

The ready money left by Sir Erasmus having proved double in amount what even himself was aware of, she had proportionably increased the legacies bequeathed to his nieces, to his executor, to the charitable institutions of the county ; and of the many who, in the first instance, had inveighed against the absurdity of investing a child of fifteen with the responsibility of a woman, nearly all had become con-

verts to her cause. “In the singular position in which Miss de Bayhurst was placed, there was an excuse for rendering *her* case an exception.”

In reply, however, to the eager invitations pressed on her by the neighbourhood, she signified her intention of completing her education under the care of Mrs. Markham, in complete retirement, as would have been the case but for her accession of fortune. All the additional power she seemed disposed to exercise was in favour of the neighbouring poor ;—and by adding to her establishment, as musician, a young *protégée* of the Marchioness of Uppingham ; to render whose services available in the parish church of Edenbourne, a fine organ was presented by the young heiress, as though a bequest from Sir Erasmus.

To honour his memory, a simple but handsome monument was also in process of erection. But it was observed that of the private chapel in the grounds, (except to the faithful Moutiar who always had it in charge,) Selina never parted with the key.

“In short,” wrote Sophia to her sister Susan, “dear Selina is already as much beloved by every one about her, as she ever was by ourselves.”

"Just what I expected!" cried Lord Delvyn.  
"I knew she would turn out an angel!"

"Just what *I* had a right to expect!" added Philip in a lower voice;—"for I gave her an excellent governess and the best of masters."

A postscript added to Sophia's letter, however, had more interest for *him* than all her anecdotes of his stepdaughter.—He was safe!—He had escaped a long-impending and long-dreaded evil!—An amicable separation it appeared had, by Lord Grandison's manly and sprited interference, been effected between Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst and her husband!

All that Sophia Askham could venture to say on so delicate a subject was, that "Sir Hugh was understood to have been a great tyrant to his wife, and a very ill-tempered man;—that most people pitied Lady Anastasia, and were determined to notice and support her." But she neither mentioned nor knew that Lord Grandison, without denying the errors of his daughter, had insisted so strongly upon provocation and injurious usage, that Sir Hugh had, of his own accord, proposed to make her a liberal allowance and the *amende honorable* of non-accusation, on condition of never seeing her face again!

No sooner was it clearly understood in so-

ciety that the case was pacific,—that no scandal, no trial,—no divorce were to be apprehended,—than the *beau monde* adopted her as a victim, and took her to its heart. The Allied Sovereigns, i. e. the Dandies and Exclusives, became her vassals and handmaidens; and on witnessing the enthusiasm manifested in her favour, Lady Grandison declared, with a triumphant air, that, from the first, she was certain she “could carry her through.”

But when the broken-spirited young woman fell upon her father’s neck to sob out her grateful thanks for his timely and loving kindness, it was not because he had “*carried her through!*”—it was because he had *brought her home!*—

“A confounded bore off my mind!”—was Philip’s mental cogitation, when his sister Susan communicated to him this piece of information; (which served to explain certain paragraphs as mysterious as all the initials of the alphabet could make them, that had recently appeared among the fashionable inuendoes of the Morning Post.)—“I have always apprehended, like the sword of Damocles over my head, that, some day or other, that unfortunate woman would burst into the midst of us here, and demand my protection. Though I was

careful to leave no address, and have never written her a line, (for her own sake as much as mine,) she *must* by this time be aware where I am; and considering her exaggerated professions of attachment, I am rather surprised that she has not followed up her system by throwing herself at my head!—Heaven grant she may have found some other Conrad;—for your passion-prompted Gulnares, who are for breaking through all bonds of decency, are, in *my* opinion, fit only for Bedlam!"—

As it was his purpose to loiter through the summer, so as to reach St. Petersburg only at the moment when the Emperor, who was making a prolonged tour, was likely to arrive for the winter fêtes, he now determined to fulfil his original intentions of proceeding to Baden, by way of Verdun; —the intelligence afforded by the *avoué* employed, rendering it desirable that he should substantiate the evidence on the spot.

Of Verdun, however, he said not a word to his family; who were on the eve of returning to England, recalled by the engagement formerly alluded to by Lord Hardynge.

"But when you have sponged upon your Emperor as long as decency will allow, Phil—"'

said Lord Middlemore, half in jest, half earnest, the last evening they were together,—“I suppose you mean to come back to England and see what Askham and his factotum are about?—You’ll be having him send Vake to parliament,—or put him into the Church,—or some dreadful thing or other, if you do not look sharp.”

“I have no immediate intention of returning to England,” was the cold reply of Philip Askham.

“Hard up, eh?—I was afraid so!—That Smolensko business was a confounded unlucky affair; and *didn’t* Lesly clean you out handsomely at picquet, the last time he was at Eden Castle!—However, I hope you’ll always recollect, Phil, that before I was Susy’s husband, I was your cousin, and that blood’s thicker than water.—If you happen to be in want of a few hundreds, Baring’s my banker, you know. You’ve only to draw upon *me*; and none of the family need be the wiser.”

A decent blush mantled on Philip’s cheek: not that money should be offered him by a kinsman he had ridiculed and despised; but from recollecting how abominably, in dealing with him about the sale of Black Muley, he had tried to overreach his brother-in-law!

From Lord Hardynge, on the other hand, he received, not indeed such noble offers,—for the nature of his fortune rendered it impossible;—but the kindest and most judicious advice.

“I am sorry to find you are bound for Baden, Phil,” said he,—“for I hear it spoken of as a place where fortunes are oftener marred than made;—*this* season especially;—for it is full of Russian and Austrian generals who have been pouncing upon sacksfull of florins wherever they could lay hands on them:—and there is a proverb, you know, about money won over the devil’s back!”

“No fear for *me!*”—replied Philip. “I have no sacksfull of florins to stake against theirs!—Besides the play-season at Baden is over.”

“And when is your *work* season to begin?” said Hardynge; scarcely knowing how far he might venture, in catechizing the broken-down dandy;—“for your hopes being knocked on the head at Eden Castle, I conclude you will think of doing something for yourself, or getting something done?—It is a thousand pities you ever gave up your place!”

“And if I had *not*, who was to have taken the management of the Askham estates?—I understand your smile!—You are right!—I should have said the *mismanagement*!”

"You do *not* understand my smile, if you think it bore reference to any one but myself.—I was thinking of a dispute I had yesterday with Cecil Danby—"

"Cecil?—What the deuce is *he* doing in Paris?"

"He arrived two days ago, at the Breteuil, with Lady Ormington; and yesterday, wasted half-an-hour at Tortoni's, trying to convince me that you and I are five years older than himself,—whereas I plead guilty only to five-and-thirty!—And you?"

"To thirty-four!"

Lord Hardynge shook his head.—"Somewhat late, my dear Philip, to begin life again; for to *that* I fear you are reduced?"—

"I have still the noble fortune bequeathed me by my father!"—retorted Philip, with some bitterness; "to say nothing of some hundreds of thousands pounds' worth of worldly wisdom, bought with my own wretched experience!"

"I had rather hear of your having ten thousand in the Stocks!—The little respect I ever had for worldly wisdom, I lose day by day. It is like the honey which bees extract from the Kalmia latifolia,—which, though taxing their pains and ingenuity as much as the nutritious kind, proves mere poison after all."

"But since some bees have only this poison-plant within reach," observed Philip, drily,— "no one can be surprised that their combs are tainted.—However, my pedlar's pack, such as it is, constitutes the chief part of my wealth : so do not put me out of conceit with it."

"I wish only to put you in better conceit with your fellow-creatures"—rejoined Hardynge ; "for worldly wisdom is the half-way house towards misanthropy.—I can understand, (as an old friend of yours and Lady Anastasia's,) that just now, you may think it desirable to absent yourself from England. But when the black cloud has blown over, why not come back again, and take your stand on your own ground, in the great mêlée ?—This is a pleasant city we are living in,—and a mighty pleasant life we have lived in it; but, as I was saying yesterday to Cecil, to live like those who have to die at the end of their lives,—to live like those who have a conscience to appease as well as appetites and a digestion,—nothing like the land where you hear on Sundays only the church bells ; and where you take your sunshine, as the French their wine, in the shape of *eau rougie*!—England, my dear Philip, is the wholesomest place for English people."—

"For English people who have vested interests in the country,"—interrupted Philip.—

"One and all, we have vested interests in the country!"—said Lord Hardynge.—"We have the graves of our fathers and the earth that will afford graves to our children;—the language that was spoken round our cradle, and *ought* to be spoken round our death-bed!—I am no bigot to the prejudices of England.—I am thankful that she should be enlightened, let the light shine from whence it may,—ay, even from the tapers on the altars of Rome, or the seven-branched candlestick of the synagogue! But, like the banyan-tree, as I grow older, I incline to the parent soil; and take firmer root in it by every new branch!—I swear to you, Philip, that, with a choice of fortunes, I would rather so live as to add my single brick to the great pyramid of our national greatness,—no matter in what department,—literature,—jurisprudence,—polity,—science,—art,—than flutter as the brightest butterfly in continental sunshine, enjoying the delightful blue skies of Naples, or delightful blue coteries of Paris."—

"Hear, hear, hear, hear, hear!—If you talk so confoundedly like Henry," was the sneering reply of Philip Askham, "I shall conclude you

want to be made Lord Rector of Glasgow—or that you have been losing money at the Salon!—*A revoir*,—I will not say *Adieu*! for since you are in so philosophical a vein, I shall be sure to meet you to-night in the *foyer* of the opera!"—

"No, I must wish you good-bye *now!*"—said Hardynge. "I have promised to devote my last evening in Paris to Delvyn and Cecil."—

Lord Hardynge was in fact little inclined to expose himself to the flippant observations of one so heartless as Philip, concerning the motive of his return to England; for his errand in London was one of a sacred nature.—

Immediately after the death of his father, a noble subscription had been raised among his private friends,—chiefly the members of the bar, to erect a monumental statue to his memory in Westminster Abbey; and having been completed by Flaxman, it was now about to be inaugurated. The work, exquisite in its execution, bore the impress of genius dedicating to genius its best endeavours.—It was not the mere result of *hireling* labour,—the artist had wrought with the hope of doing honour to one of the most distinguished patrons of art.—A frequent guest at Eske Hill, he justified the assertion of Goethe in his matchless play of *Torquato Tasso*, that, more than the greatest

of princes, by the tribute of her own creations,

Genius requiteth Hospitality!—

A solemn promise had been made to Lord Hardynge by his mother, who remained at Eske Hill in charge of her idolized grandchildren during his absence, that she would not visit the Abbey till his arrival.—Even then, he chose to survey the object of his veneration first, alone. He could not venture to expose, even to *such* a witness, the nature of his feelings!—

Lord Hardynge was represented,—not “in his habit as he lived,”—but in his habit as he judged;—a fine bas-relief on the pedestal of the statue illustrating a well-known incident in his early forensic career, when a poor Cumbrian peasant woman, preserved by the eloquence of his gratuitous defence, and subsequently *proved* to be innocent by the confession of the guilty party,—beset him on his way into court, and threw herself with her whole family at his feet.—

Inexpressible was the emotion of Emma’s husband on beholding this life-like portrait of his father, calm, reflective, commanding,—uniting his air of high intelligence and strong determination with his peculiarly benignant smile, planted

for the veneration of centuries in that sepulchre of kings, in the midst of all the glories by which the triumphs of mind, heart, or station, have illustrated the land.—By his own endowments and industry were those honours achieved by that excellent father ; and while contemplating them with tearful eyes, the vigorous truth of the line,

*Qui sert bien sa patrie n'a pas besoin d'aïeux !*

came home like the voice of nature to his heart.—

From the excitement of his own feelings on the occasion, he almost dreaded the gratifying duty of supporting his mother to the sacred spot.—For he was unable to make allowances for the subduing nature of a woman's grief, on visiting the last abode of the partner of her happier life.—The feelings of Lady Hardynge could not exult like those of her son !—*She* had scarcely courage to look upon the effigy that recalled only too vividly the better self of her existence.—It was not till, on a future occasion, the proud son was accompanied by his own dear wife, that he obtained perfect sympathy in his feelings while whispering to her—“ *This* is indeed something to excite the emulation of one's children.—*Here*, dear Emma, shall I bring our sons, to give them courage for the duties of life !”—

A great vexation was it meanwhile to the Hardynge family to be prevented by their awkward position with regard to Eden Castle, from accepting the invitation despatched by Selina to those so dear to her mother, to be the first to visit her in her new home.—A similar obstacle prevented the other members of the Askham family from becoming her guests. But though it was assigned by the Dowager, as her motive for refusing permission to Sophia to visit her friend, it is more than probable that her objections *really* arose from a tardy discovery that Edenbourne Rectory sufficed the ambitions of the youngest daughter she had destined to become a duchess; and that the Hardynge family, originally so offensive to her as “professional people,” were likely to do her the further injury of defiling the family tree of all the Askhams, by a connexion with Divinity as well as Law!— Sophia’s trothplight to William Scotney, which occurred during the unlucky visit to Eden Castle purporting the engagement of Lord Delvyn, was in fact the origin of that intimate acquaintance with Miss de Bayhurst’s comings and goings, which her sisters and his lordship were so little able to account for.—

As yet, however, the Dowager remained inexorable to the prayers of the Church.—It was

in vain that Henry, who was somewhat anxious to marry off his last remaining sister out of his way, reminded her that, sooner or later, a spiritual peerage might place Mr. Scotney on the same level with his cousin; and that the Duke of Woburn, and Marquis of Longleat, had both sons in the church. At present, he was only rector of Edenbourne,—at present, he was no better than Dr. Hacket, who used always to call her My lady, and eat his fish with a knife;—and she could not sanction such a *mésalliance*.—Lady Lynchmore was to be pitied!—But the Sir Cornelius O'Flynn of Flynnstown Castle, she had formerly presumed to disparage, was a crowned head compared with this odious *Mr. Scotney*!—

“ Be patient,—she will become more reasonable in time!”—was the consolatory adjuration of Selina, who felt that her happiness would be completed by the settlement of her friend at the rectory; and had already promised the young pastor the reversion of a living in her own gift, which would more than double their income.—

In the distribution of poor Sir Erasmus's legacies, Mr. Scotney was in fact of the greatest assistance to her; and a handsome school-house was in process of erection on a piece of ground

she had given for the purpose; the progress of which engrossed all the attention he could spare from his love, or the young heiress from the Lodge.

Not that in the mansion itself, much remained for her to execute. From the moment the singular old man conceived the intention of bequeathing his property to the daughter of Evelyn, he had devoted his whole time and a large portion of his income, to render the place all she could desire.—The house was already excellent; and though, on her arrival, a considerable portion of it was still unfurnished, rich carpets lay, rolled up, awaiting the orders of the infirm old man, and innumerable objects of virtù and costly furniture, had never been removed from their cases.—

The adjustment of all this afforded a pleasant occupation for the leisure of the young *Châtelaine*; and though Edward, on his arrival at the Lodge to spend a portion of his holidays with his sister, complained that she was doing the thing meanly,—that by comparison with Bayhurst or Grosvenor Square, or even Eden Castle, her simple chintz and white maple looked cell-ish,—Quakerish,—and poverty-struck,—Selina held firm,—she would not even listen to him when he prescribed a double dose

of Latin grammar for Percy ; and on pretence of his being too old for petticoat government, insisted on taking him to see the hounds meet, mounted on a pony which, in proportion to old Elshie, was as Bucephalus to a house-dog !— It was, indeed, almost a relief to her when her wild brother, whose society the altered state of the establishment at Bayhurst rendered doubly precious to the deserted Sir Hugh, pleaded the necessity of returning to his uncle.—

For she had been sadly afraid that Edward's reckless spirits would betray her into a nearer intimacy with Lord Askham's family than the civil bow by which, every Sunday after church, she recognized him who had given her so cordial an invitation to Eden Castle when her prospects were less brilliant than now ; but which he could not interpret into an intention of submitting to be introduced to Miladi Hasscamp.

Nothing that she could plead, however, had prevented Edward from riding over to the castle for “ a glimpse of the old place ;”— and when invited to luncheon, the young Etonian could not refuse himself the delight of seeing “ Vake” unlock the cellaret, and economize the peaches and chicken-pie !—

"Poor old Eden!" cried he. "To see that woman sitting at the head of the table, with her diamond earrings of a morning, and her voice and moustache like a corporal of dragoons, in the place of my poor gentle mother, was enough to make one's blood run cold!"—

Lord Askham, who in his saucy boyhood had found such fault with the establishment of his parents,—the woman cook, and humdrum domestic evenings of Eden Castle,—had, in fact, by his own imprudence, reduced himself to the most penurious and comfortless shifts; and by way of nightly recreation, to a glass of stiff punch, and piequet with a captain of marines!

Meanwhile, the autumn and winter proceeded uneventfully but cheerfully at the Lodge. Continually employed, always occupied with projects for the advantage of others, not a moment of Selina's new existence hung heavy on her hands; and though, under any circumstances, respect for the memory of her benefactor would have excluded company from the Lodge during the year succeeding his death, she experienced no desire for the extension of the family circle.—

"When the spring comes, however, my dear young lady, I shall be having you run up to town!"—said Mr. Moran, with a knowing smile,

when he visited them at Christmas, and rendered ample justice to the admirable administration of the child-heiress who was still his ward.—

“ Even less than now !”—was the frank reply of Selina ; “ for then, the country will have resumed its beauties ; and Mrs. Markham and I,—and even Percy and Susan,—know too well what it is to undergo a daily walk in Grosvenor Square !”—

And, true to her word, Selina passed the season in the country.—

The Hexham family were still in Ireland, and Lord Delvyn in Paris ;—not even Lady Emilia’s marriage having availed to entice him from the pleasant capital, where his growing intimacy with Cecil Danby afforded a new view of existence.—

The coxcomb *par excellence* appeared to take peculiar pleasure in completing the education of one of the finest young men who had graced the English aristocracy since his own *début* in public life ;—partly because, in Cecil’s first season of flirtations previous to his departure for Portugal, his attention had been a moment attracted by the full-blown charms of Lord Lynchmore’s *parvenue* countess, — never renowned for cruelty ; but far more, on account

of the frankness of Lord Delvyn's manly nature and his vivid gaiety of heart.—

But when, by degrees, during the convalescence that followed Danby's all but fatal accident in the Bois de Boulogne, and confinement in the Hotel of the La Vrillières, the confidenee of the warm-hearted Delvyn was fully accorded to his new friend, there was something so new and piquant in the idea of the “little wife,”—the child-heiress,—the Titania of the Welsh border,—who from a sort of Mrs. Margery Meanwell had suddenly started up into a divinity capable of imposing on the son of the stately Lady Lynehmore,—which captivated the fancy of Cecil.

After the vapourish affectations and meretricious graces of *la femme incomprise*, it was refreshing to hear of Selina's transparent complexion, and transparent simplicity of mind. For Cecil had become so much accustomed to see the lily painted (with *rouge végétal*) and fresh perfume thrown upon the violet, (out of Lubin's shop,) that the idea of a *natural* natural flower was like the revival of spring!—

Still, there was enough of the original sin of coxeombry remaining in Lady Ormington's son, to tempt him into eiting the charms of the lovely Countesses of the Faubourg St. Ger-

main,—and, still more, those of the fifty divine *coryphées* just then figuring in “Les Danaides,” in opposition to the untutored attractions of one who, but that she was an heiress, would have been still a schoolgirl!—

“ My dear Cecil !”—cried the young Lord,— “ I have received such a powerful lesson against the odiousness of selfish dandyism, in the person of Philip Askham, that I swear to you I would sooner become usher to a charity school than adopt the vocation of a *roué*.—Such creatures are unworthy to live, and unfit to die!—Of two bad things, better be a humdrum than a humbug !”—

Like the squire of Marmion,

Warmly he spoke,—with earnest grace,—  
His faith was painted in his face,—

and to those whose feelings were *really* warm, and faith *really* fervent, Cecil knew better than to oppose the phosphoric light of irony that shines but glows not, which he reserved for such boon companions as Sir Walter Lesly and Horace Trevor. But for this, he might have responded, with one of Henry Askham’s owlish looks,—

Σεμνὸς ἔρος ἀρετῆς ὁ δὲ κυπριδός ἄσχος ὀφελλα.

But Delvyn was so manifestly of the better clay of human nature, that it would have been unworthy to deteriorate even the surface, by so much as a vitriolic drop!—

“ But I don’t understand, Del,” said he,— “ why,—since you are thus sworn to the service of your fairy queen, and your father has a house standing empty within a mile of her gates, you do not indulge your eyes with a sight of her, instead of moping up and down the dismantled Louvre, like a schoolboy in an orchard where the apple-harvest is over; or attuning your ear to the music of Racine by the declamation of Mademoiselle Duchesnois,—who, though she may act like a Muse, *looks* deucedly like a Gorgon!”—

“ In the first place, I could not reconcile it to my conscience, nor, I fear, to the decencies of society, to be philandering at Hexham Hall, while my family is celebrating its first wedding in dear old Ireland;—where my mother would keep me perpetually on the edge of the sword, by her icy civilities to such of the royal blood of Tara with which our own has been recently intermingled, as may present themselves at Lynchmore in seedy coats, or gowns of questionable length of waist.”—

“ So far,—cogent!”—

“ In the next place, I never heard of a gardener who had been waiting for years the blooming of an aloe on whose perfection the welfare of his future life was to depend, who was ass enough, at the eleventh hour, to injure the development of the blossom by meddling with the tender leaves or digging round the root !”—

“ An illustration worthy of Tom the Great or my Philhellenic friend, Byron !”—cried Cecil.  
“ You talk like a Daniel come to judgment : and as Juvenal hath it,

Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia !

But if Hexham be out of reach, I see no reason why you should deny yourself London, which is some hundreds of miles nearer to your *belle au bois dormant* !”—

“ I have afforded you *one* exquisite reason, O most pedantic of coxcombs !”—cried Delvyn, laughing,

“ Immo duas dabo, inquit ille, una si parum est :  
Et si duarum pœnitentia, addentur due !”

Is it so long since you confronted that hideous community,—the match-hunting dowagers of London,—that you have forgotten the *corvée* of being hunted through a season’s balls,—be-

sieged with billets-doux for which you care as much as for a blacksmith's bill,—and invitations you are as little eager to obey, as a sheriff's warrant?—For my part, I hate to find myself provoked into mistrust of the good-humour and graciousness of girls, (honest-hearted, perhaps, as my own sisters!) only because they have mothers as cunning as Fouché, and as active as Bow Street runners."

"It is true," observed the Coxcomb, taking a complacent view of his own manly leg,— "that such things be in London, and overcome one like a summer cloud, without intitling one to put up an umbrella.—As an elder son, however, I fear *your* experience may have been greater than mine!"—

"The horrid mother of those charming sisters of Philip Askham's, (and if according to the motto of the Rodneys, *Non generant aquilæ columbas*, I really don't see why *daws* should have the privilege!)—persecuted me to death last season, and then hunted me from Almack's to the Marches of Wales, simply because a charming daughter of hers was secretly engaged to a worthy young fellow of a parson,— (the rector of our parish,)—whose pretensions I had the good nature to cover under the shadow of my wings.—Lady Askham, who

considered everything law and gospel that was proposed by my father's son, used to sanction the most delicious greenwood strolls or boatings on the Eden, which served to bring together, *en partie carrée* young Scotney and his fair Sophia, and your humble servant with his darling Titania."—

"In requital of her meanness, may she live to see her daughter cutting bread and butter, like Werter's Charlotte, for half-a-dozen parsonic olive branches!" cried Cecil. "But as to *you*, Del, if you allow this little glowworm of yours to be pecked out of the moss and carried off by some night-bird of evil omen, while *you* are butterflying here in Paris, I shall consider that you deserve much worse!"—

"It will end so,—I foresee that it will end so!"—cried Lord Delvyn,—with a petulant sigh;—"for now Lina is an heiress, hang me if I shall ever find courage to tell her all that has been passing in my heart!—Such is the confounded re-action of the manœuvring of those match-making mammas;—teaching one first to mistrust *their* purposes,—and then, one's own!"—

The return of Napoleon from Elba, luckily put a period to these perplexities of heart;—for lest he should end by being shipwrecked be-

tween such a Scylla and Charybdis as “Vake,” and another Léontine,—Lord Delvyn, instead of going round by Toulouse, immediately hurried off to Dover with Lady Ormington and her son.

True to his antipathies, however, he fled from the glare and tumult of the London season, to the land whose interests he was shortly about to represent in parliament.—And though of *him* Lord Lynchmore had failed to make his customary inquiry of—“What he intended to do for Ireland?”—Delvyn soon manifested his good intentions by a careful and deliberate tour through her provinces,—a favour which most Irish noblemen extend only to Italy or the Rhine.—He arrived at Hexham to meet his family in the autumn, more accurately acquainted with the statistics and resources of his native country, than the majority of those who have vexed the dull ear of a drowsy parliament by clamouring for redress of her wrongs under cover of her ragged mantle,—which, tattered as it is, they contrive to convert for their own use into a comfortable waprascal.

He had not, however, been many days restored to the adoration of his parents and tormenting of Lady Hester and Lady Harriet

concerning his growing dandyism and Parisian refinement, before he heartily congratulated himself on his self-government in having refrained from all demonstration of feeling towards the idol of his boyish love ; for Selina, now on the verge of womanhood, beautiful as an angel and an object of universal worship, was so completely changed in her deportment towards him, as to authenticate all the maleficent influences usually ascribed to the ascendancy of the molten calf.—Though with his parents more respectful than ever,—though with his sisters affectionate as their own Emilia,—towards *him*, lest he should entertain designs upon her houses and lands or court her *pour les beaux yeux de sa cassette*, she exhibited the most freezing reserve.—Such at least was *his* interpretation of the singular alteration in her manners.

The result was, as might be naturally expected, that though his indignation found vent in a thousand secret apostrophes against the baseness of female nature, and the strangeness that one so young, so fair, so active in benevolence, so much in charity with all and everything around her, should harbour so mean a quality as sordid suspicion,—he became ten thousand times more in love'—Never had

Philip Askham (in those better days of his nature, ere the leprosy of worldliness extended its crocodile scales over his heart)—ridden so recklessly over briar and bramble,—through wild ravine and furzy gap, across the solitudes of Eden Chase, making the echoes vocable, like Orlando in the Forest of Arden, with the name of his ladye-love!—Never had William Scotney, in the milder paroxysms of his parsonic attachment, so barbarously be-rhymed the white cliffs of the Eden, as the sonnets of the disappointed Delvyn!—

Had Selina smiled upon any happier man, or conversed more frankly with some other pretender to her smiles, he would doubtless have made a victim of him on the spot.—But there was nobody to kill!—Except Scotney, the Pastor fido of Sophy Askham and Edenbourne,—and Dr. Boswell, now the happy husband of Winifred Gwatkin,—not a creature in beaver and broadcloth, except Moran and the piano-forte tuner, ever passed the precincts of the Lodge!—

The following spring, which carried the young heiress far into her seventeenth year, Lady Uppingham, compassionating the seclusion of her life, invited her to pass some time at Uppingham House; proposing, since the

peculiar circumstances in which she was placed seemed to put forward the hour-hand of her years,—to present her at court.—For in the opinion of all her friends, an early marriage,—which need not be the less prudent for being early,—would afford the best security for the happiness of the unprotected Selina.

But to her beloved seclusion she still faithfully adhered!—“I am perfectly happy,—perfectly contented here,”—pleaded she, in reply to their gracious persuasions. “I might lose but *could* not gain in self-contentment, by an encounter with the struggles of the world.”

Even when Edward, at the suggestion of her uncle, (whom she had never invited to the Lodge, and who was eager to delight his eyes by the sight of that developed beauty described by her brother as exceeding that of the lost Evelyn,) besought her to come to town “like other people,” and enjoy the pleasures appropriate to her birth and fortune, Selina was not to be persuaded. She contented herself with replying to *him* as to the Hardynges and Middlemores,—that “at present she had no desire to quit the Lodge.”

For to Edward had never been confided that terrible,—that heartbreaking secret,—which the malice of Philip Askham had branded like a

stigma of shame on her young heart :—that the legitimacy of their birth was contestable, and might sooner or later be set aside!

Such was the cause of her reserve towards Lord Delvyn,—to whom her heart was secretly pledged by those bonds of early affection which no subsequent predilection supersedes.—Such the motive of her obstinate self-seclusion. She would aspire to no distinctions,—she would submit to have no distinctions *assigned* her, which might afterwards be withheld as a reproach.

Before the year was over, indeed, she had a pretext in family mourning for postponing the period of her introduction into society.—The newspapers announced the happy close of the lingering illness of Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst, at a secluded seat belonging to Lord Grandison, on the western coast; adding a pompous list of dukes, duchesses, and peers of every grade, who would be placed in mourning by her decease!—

Of those who perused the paragraph, a few observed that “they always fancied she had died two years before: or was divorced, or separated, *or something?*”—a few, piously remarked that “as she had long been too great an invalid to go out, her death must be a

happy release ;”—a few (including Helen Middlemore) wondered whether Sir Hugh would marry again ;—and shortly afterwards, *not* a few remarked how *very* well Lady Grandison looked in velvet and jet !—Horace Trevor protesting that mourning was the real *eau de Jouvence*, and had made her quite young again !—

Not a member of the set at Grandison House,—nay, *no one* but the Hardynge family at Holmehurst, gave a tear to her memory !—Her father, though he had protected her to the last, knew that, from the poignancy of her mental sufferings, and the disorder they had engendered, she was better in her grave :—and who was there among the great and gay to note with indignant sympathy how many charms, how many excellencies had been sacrificed in her person to the selfishness and heartlessness of fashion ?—At eight-and-twenty,—still beautiful, still capable of diffusing happiness around her, and perfecting the good gifts which nature had so lavishly bestowed,—she sank into the grave unlamented, ay, even by the exiled *roué* who had been the first to insinuate the worm into the bud, and who was now quaffing at a foreign court the lees of the cup of Circe !—

Not that there existed further occasion for his sojourn abroad. It was wholly the result of choice. For the moment that, by a satisfactory winding up of Sir Erasmus's estate, the executor ascertained the residue to be considerable beyond his utmost expectations, he opposed no further obstacle to Miss de Bayhurst's desire to discharge at once the liabilities of her step-father, which she had previously resolved to defray progressively out of her income. Without further reference therefore either to the obliger or obliged, the settlement was speedily completed between their respective men of business; and Philip Askham stood clear in the world. And though, including the advances on the Askham estates, the sum of £14,500 might be considered a large excess for a man whose patrimonial fortune amounted to five, and who had never been accused of a generous action or charitable deed, Mr. Moran considered his ward to escape on easy terms, in having only half that sum to disburse.

The advantage attained by Philip Askham, on the other hand, might be estimated at treble the purchase; not alone by redeeming his credit from obloquy and restoring his freedom of action; but by piquing the family pride of his brother Percy into an extension of grace, by

charging the Edenbourne estates with an annuity of five hundred a year, of which he was immediately to enter upon the enjoyment.

It is true that the other brothers of Lord Askham required nothing at his hands.—Henry could draw at sight upon the nation; and Claude and Richard were making their way in their professions, with the zeal, discretion, and good faith which constitute after all the noblest patrimony; while Edmund had long been the especial charge of Lord Middlemore, of whose father he was the godson.

The compunctionous generosity of Lord Askham might however arise from the information Dr. Boswell thought it necessary to impart, (in reply to his lordship's angry murmurs against being sent so often to Cheltenham,) that his liver being seriously attacked, it would be as well if the interests of his family were secured by the early arrangement of his affairs.—For thirteen years of the habitual indulgence, far worse than accidental excess,—the boozy intemperance of a man ill at ease in his affairs, and ill at ease with his conscience,—had so completely undermined his constitution, that had any friend besides “Vake” ever visited his deserted fireside, at Eden Castle, he must have noticed with regret, the tremulous hand,—op-

pressed breath,—eyes enlarged and lustreless,—swollen ankles, and sallow cheeks, of him who was accounted one of the handsomest young men of the day, at the time he went round by Toulouse.

The act of liberality towards Philip, therefore, which set the “broken dandy lately on his travels,” free from his encumbrances, resulted perhaps from the hope of conciliating a friend for his children, in the nearest heir to the estates ; — and his intentions might have undergone some modification, could he have suspected either that his brother had visited Verdun in person, to search out registers and examine witnesses, in the hope of invalidating his foolish marriage and establishing the illegitimacy of the little monkey in the coat and cravat ;—or that, to his infinite disappointment, Philip had found all as fast and formal as the church, the *Mairie*, and Captain Wegg, (the particular friend of Mdlle, Léontine,) could make it.

When the next editions of the Peerage bore tidings to the world that

“Percy, fourth Lord Askham, had married at Verdun, June 4th, 1808, Mademoiselle Marie Clotilde Hermione Léontine Boulanger ; and that the issue of the marriage consisted of

"Philip Wegg, born Sept. 10, 1810." there was no gainsaying the accuracy of a statement, which had the decency to leave unmentioned the elder girls.

The vexations of poor Lord Askham's position, and the miseries of his comfortless home, probably assisted the increasing stiffness of the nightly punch prepared for him by Vake, to counteract both the waters of Cheltenham and the prescriptions of Dr. Boswell;—for in the Peerage of the year following, "Philip Wegg, fifth Lord Askham," figured in place of Percy the fourth; and when another year expired, Clotilde Hermione Léontine, Dowager Lady Askham, was announced as remarried to Capt. Wegg, R.N., (the well-bred Peerage concluding, that the unaccountable initials R.M., must have been forwarded to it by mistake!) fourth son of Cornelius Wegg, of Mount Wegg, in the county of Tipperary.

The happy pair thus suitably united, are not only still extant, but the annual fancy-ball given at Cheltenham by Lieut.-Colonel Wegg and the Dowager Lady Askham, is one of the grandest affairs of the season in that city of preposterosities; and though "Vake" has considerably transferred to her ladyship the nightly punch which was supposed to have terminated

the mortal cares of her deceased lord, the dose appears to have lost its virtue; for every Sunday of every London season, the flaming family coach of the Dowager may be seen parading Hyde Park; its crimson pannels adorned with armorial bearings that would nearly cover the Askham estates; while at such popular assemblies as Polish fêtes and Spitalfields balls, her ladyship's blaze of diamonds, and glare of rouge, and above all, disconnection from society, render her an object of universal interrogation.

The young Lord Askham, indeed, in order to evade the impertinent interference of his officious step-father, resides chiefly abroad. But when occasionally in London, his time is usually divided between watching the ballet through his *lorgnon* from his place in the stalls; after previously seeing it rehearsed with the naked eye.

Among the persons most gratified on hearing that Philip Askham's affairs were arranged by the joint liberality of his brother and step-daughter, was young Edward de Bayhurst.

“ You have done exactly what I would, myself, dear Lina, if I enjoyed *your* independence!”—cried he to his sister. “ The fellow can never again say or *suppose* that either our-

selves, or—on those belonging to us,—are under pecuniary obligation to him !”

“ Miss de Bayhurst has acted nobly,—as she seems to do on all occasions,” observed, on the other hand, the Marquis of Uppingham, when Margaret apprised him of the altered prospects which her brother had communicated in a letter from Töplitz, as if a mere item of the news of the day. “ But nothing that has been done for Philip,—nothing that *could* be done for him,—would render him other than what I described him to you sixteen years ago,—a poor creature!—Not a quality in his selfish nature to encourage cultivation.—The surface is polished —but all is hollow within !”—

“ Still, he might surely do better for himself than he is doing,” rejoined Margaret,—“ Philip has good abilities, and is well-bred and agreeable.—The Regent never sees me without inquiring after his welfare.”

“ Which does more honour to His Royal Highness than to Philip! Yet I would venture a maravedi that, were your brother in the household, within twelve months he would contrive to give mortal offence!—A man so devoted to self is sure in the end to wound the self-love of other people.”

“ And yet,” pleaded Margaret, (to whom

her brother was peculiarly endeared by one of the few disinterested actions of which he had ever been guilty,—his interposition on occasion of her marriage,) “I cannot help thinking that if Philip had persisted in a public career, his abilities would have carried him further than even Henry.”—

“ He gave up his office only because deficient in the qualities that have created the fortune of his brother.—The career of Henry has been governed in private life by a strict sense of propriety; and in public, by undeviating steadiness of purpose.—The first duty of a public man is *clearly* to understand his own mind; the next, *firmly* to work out its suggestions,—Incessant practice, which strengthens the hand of the surgeon, strengthens also the aim of the politician,—till both become unerring. — By consistency and perseverance, Henry has at length *become* what he once *pretended* to be!”—

“ Yet even *his* ambitions had a selfish origin!” said Lady Uppingham,—still seeking some defence for Philip.—

“ All our ambitions have, more or less, a selfish origin,” replied her husband,—“ But the self-worship which *I* call criminal, is that which is indulged solely for our personal gratification,

and at the cost or to the disadvantage of our neighbours.—I have heard you, dearest Margaret, ascribe your brother's resignation of his place to conscientiousness of political principle. A gratuitous apology!—Political principle had as little to do with it, as with his choice of a waistcoat. He became a Whig simply because liberal politics did him most honour in the gay and showy set with which he associated ; and if Carlton House or Grandison House had chosen to profess Mahomedanism, thenceforward no better Mussulman than Philip!—Forgive me, dearest little wife !” added he, with a smile, on discerning the mortified expression of Lady Uppingham’s countenance.—“ Be assured that, unless to *you*, not a syllable have I ever uttered to his prejudice ;—nor *even* to you, till I saw him fairly re-embarked on the golden stream of fortune.”

On Cecil Danby’s return to England, shortly afterwards, among the numerous questions addressed to him by the idle catechizers at White’s, was whether, in the course of his travels, he had encountered Philip Askham.—

“ I thought you might have met him at Naples, last winter ?”—said Horace Trevor. “ Since you went away, my dear Cis, Askham has been set on his legs again,—or rather *fallen*

upon them,—as he always manages to do!—To his own amazement and that of his creditors, his wife's daughter, on coming into an immense fortune, paid his debts!—Lady Anastasia, too, as soon as he got tired of her, did him the favour to die.—And Lord Askham has been lately generous enough to make a settlement on him, which, with tolerable economy, will find him in shoe-strings and eau de Cologne!"

" And the step-daughter with the immense fortune?"—inquired Danby, who, having recently parted with Delvyn in the Mediterranean, had promised to send him all the intelligence he could obtain of the hard-hearted object of his love;—" what may have become of *her*?"

" Looking out for an heiress eh, Cis?"—cried Lesly, contemplating with an air of impudent superiority, the sun-burned face of the somewhat travel-stained Coxcomb. " It won't do, my boy, it won't do!—We have *all* had a try;—and all, in vain."

" But I understood that Miss de Bayhurst spent her whole life in the country?"—observed Cecil.

" There!—He has positively been *aux informations* already! You forget, my dear fellow, that *in* the country she inhabits, stands Hexham Hall; and that Lynchmore has now got Lunardelli!"

“ Well ?”—

“ Well !—Are you so completely *désorienté* as to be ignorant that whoever secures Lunardelli, secures *us* ?”—cried Trevor, with a pitying shrug. “ Lynchmore kept open house last winter. The Carlton hounds are *now* prodigiously the fashion !”

“ The heiress, then, is a queen and huntress, chaste and fair ?—*La Diane*, not *à la biche*, but *au renard* ?”

“ God forbid !—But she has always been intimate with the Lynchmores ; and at Hexham, the Cynosure of neighbouring eyes is easily approachable.”

“ Quæ forma, ut se tibi semper  
Imputet ?”

observed Cecil Danby, with his usual affectation of pedantry.

“ *Entre nous*, the Carlton hounds have been adopted as a pretext by many a fellow far more eager after the heiress, than the fox !”—added Lesly, aside to Cecil,—with a sly indication of the head towards their friend Trevor.

“ And in spite of all, she intends to remain the Virgin Queen of Edenbourne Lodge ?”—persisted the inquisitive Coxcomb.

“ *C'est selon !—Reste à voir*, what she will

say to the Cecil of Cecils!"—cried Trevor, with a sarcastic smile.—“ She was certainly cruel to young Croydon, the Duke of Sandbeck's heir,—whom his cunning grandmother sent down to Hexham expressly to make up to her ;—and Camelford declares that she refused Shoreham,— and Shoreham declares, that she refused Camelford;—and what is stranger still, for once, both speak truth!"

“ Young De Bayhurst, who is going it rather fast at Oxford, gives out that his sister has determined never to marry.—But I suppose it is as a bait to the Jews!"—observed Trevor, picking his teeth.

“ Edward de Bayhurst need scarcely have recourse to the Jews, and still less to *doing* them!"—cried Lord Middlenore, who now joined the party ; “ for his uncle has not a week to live!—My brother-in-law, Hardynge, who has just come up from a visit in his neighbourhood, told me yesterday he was given over."—

“ And we all know," added Trevor, “ that

Un oncle est un caissier donné par la nature!"

And this statement was substantially as correct as the mutual accusations of Lords Shoreham and Camelford!—Sir Hugh de Bayhurst

was not only on his deathbed, but solely supported through his sufferings, and comforted in his gloomy hours of self-accusation and despair, by the angelic care of Selina.—On receiving a private intimation from William Scotney of the serious nature of his illness, and that he had not courage to renew those invitations which his niece had so often declined, (for since his separation from poor Lady Anastasia, she had never visited Bayhurst,) she lost not a moment in hastening to accord to a contrite sufferer the concession she had perseveringly withheld from the triumphant man of the world.—Nor did the presence of even Edward,—his future representative,—his pride,—his heir,—appear to impart half the comfort which he derived from contemplating once more the heavenly countenance of his niece.—

“Words of kindness from *her* lips,” murmured the enfeebled man, “sound almost like words of pardon from those of Evelyn!”—

One morning, when his condition seemed to have undergone a considerable change for the worse, Selina ventured to despatch her brother to Holmehurst, unsuspected by the invalid, to solicit a friendly visit from Dr. Scotney, which she trusted might lead to results of the happiest tendency; and on her assuming Edward’s

place beside the sick couch, the dying man profited by the opportunity to entreat, with feeble but earnest accents, that she would promise to exercise her influence over the future master of Bayhurst, in favour of its tenantry and poor.—

“ I sometimes fear that the duties about to devolve upon Edward will scarcely weigh sufficiently on his volatility of nature,”—continued the sick man ;—adding in a lower voice, “ and yet the faults of two preceding generations render works of charity and acts of justice a double duty in my successor, who will have to accomplish them, not only as a matter of duty, but as a sacrifice of expiation !”

Apprehensive of the consequences of his growing perturbation, Selina attempted to soothe him by assurances of the excellent intentions of her brother.

“ The best intentions become as the smoking flax under the influence of the evil passions of our nature !”—replied the excited Sir Hugh.—“ The energies of my own youth were wasted in the creation of torments for the embitterment of my middle age ;—and hatred,—envy,—jealousy,—revenge,—have been the portion and occupation of one who, with a better regulated mind, might have secured the happiest enjoy-

ments of this life. Self,—self,—was the object of my worship; and every casual wound inflicted on my self-love, created a nest of asps, which I cherished for the punishment of other people, but which preyed only on myself!"

"Compose yourself, dear uncle,"—faltered his niece, startled and alarmed by his vehemence,—“compose yourself, dear uncle!—*Those sufferings are over now!*”

“*Those sufferings, Selina, are eternal!*”—persisted the self-convicted man;—“for where they cease on earth, it is to give place to the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched!—Shudder not, my child,—shudder not, my gentle Selina!—*You*—worthy to be the child of Edward and Evelyn,—have no need of a lesson so terrible. *To you* I have no words of warning to impart!—Only a parting prayer, Selina, only a parting prayer!—that you will remember in *yours* the name of one on whose grave the grass might otherwise refuse to grow; and exercise such influence over your brother as may render him an honour to our ancient name.”—

It was a critical moment for Miss de Bayhurst; for, unless she *now* opened her heart to her uncle, the cares which, for some years past,

had lain so heavy on it, might never, *never* be removed!—

“ I will obey you,” said she—“ trust me, to the very utmost I will obey you.—The poor of Bayhurst shall not want a friend.—But you speak of Edward as your heir,—as your successor.—Is it absolutely certain that no other claimant may arise?”—

“ Another claimant,—I do not understand you?” said the suffering man,—a look of bewilderment succeeding to his air of supplication. “ What other *could* supersede the only son of my brother?”—

“ I had understood,—I was once assured,” faltered Selina,—every vestige of colour forsaking her cheek, and her quivering lips almost refusing their office,—“ that no evidence existed—of—of the *marriage* of my parents?”

“ PHILIP ASKHAM!”—shouted the dying De Bayhurst,—in a voice at once so loud and hoarse, that Selina trembled as she listened.—“ No living being but that wretch could have dared to breathe such blasphemy into the ears of Evelyn’s child!—Tell me, Selina, (and draw near and give me your hand, that I may feel some kindred thing beside me, now that human love is all that remains,)—tell me that it was that pitiful creature,—that enemy of all my happiness—who dared to—”

He paused,—his exhausted breath seemed incapable of giving utterance to those bitter words.

“ But it is not *true?*”—cried Selina, grasping fervently between her own the cold hand extended towards her. “ Say only—*only*—that it is not *true!*”—

“ False as his own nature!”—burst as by a last effort from the lips of the expiring De Bayhurst.—“ Welcome, welcome!”—he exclaimed, as at that moment Dr. Scotney appeared on the threshold of his chamber,—beckoned in by Selina, on seeing the door gently opened by her brother. “ You are come, I doubt not, Scotney, upon an errand of peace, to cheer the departure of a dying sinner.—But be it your previous office to satisfy the fears of this anxious child.—Edward,—Selina,—draw near, my children, and thank the zeal of the good man by your side; through whose zealous aid I was enabled to authenticate the lawful marriage of your parents.”

“ But *who* ever presumed to dispute it?”—cried the intemperate Edward,—fury flashing in his eyes.

“ Evidence was for a time wanting, such as the law justly esteems indispensable,”—interposed Dr. Scotney, with a mild firmness to which, at that solemn moment, the indignant

boy attempted no rejoinder.—“ But all is now made clear.”

“ Watch over him, and protect him, and moderate his impetuous nature, when I am gone!”—said the dying man, extending his hand thankfully to the pastor of Holmehurst :—“ *not* as my nephew—*not* as the last of the Savilles ;—but as the son of one whose goodness you appreciated,—who was a victim on earth, as she is now an angel in heaven,—poor Evelyn,—poor—*poor* Evelyn Monson !”—

With mild but earnest exhortations, the christian pastor attempted to detach the solicitude of the dying man from the cares and yearnings of this world.—But it was too late.—Selina, who felt the hand of her uncle which she held between her own, grow suddenly nerveless and relaxed as the name of her mother faintly escaped his lips, was the first to point out, by falling upon her knees in prayer, that all was over,—that the erring heart was now passionless,—the wandering looks fixed in death ;—and all that remained for the compassionate friend who had hastened to Bayhurst in the fruitless hope of creating, even at the eleventh hour, a happier frame of mind, was to commend the departed to the mercy of Heaven, and close his eyes for ever!—

"But I don't exactly understand, my dear child," said old Susan, when, some weeks afterwards at the Lodge, Selina attempted to gratify her motherly interest in the fortunes of Sir Edward, ("the beautifullest babby that ever saw the light,") by an account of all that had occurred at Bayhurst, on the accession of its new owner,—"I don't exactly understand why *you*, who set such little store by such matters, should seem so pleased at Sir Edward's succeeding to his family fortune and honours, according to his good right and title so to do?"

To which remonstrance of the aged friend who, in spite of her lawn cap and apron, and humble vocation, was so much more like a mother than a menial,—Miss de Bayhurst replied by unfolding for the first time the story of those cruel fears and anxieties, which, for some years past, had encompassed her prosperous dwelling with a hedge of thorns!—

"It serves you right,—it only serves you just right!" sobbed out the faithful old nurse, to the utter surprise of Selina, who had anticipated an apostrophe of a very different nature.—"To think that you should go to keep such a pack of misery to yourself,—without the least inkling to one who loved you as if you were

her own,—and fancied she knew every thought of your mind ;—and who, by a single word, could have put an end to your uneasiness.”

“ I often longed to open my heart to you,”—said Selina, desirous to pacify her resentinent before she attempted further interrogation.—

“ But the subject was so sacred,—it seemed such sacrilege to infer that any living being could dispute the marriage of my mother.”—

“ Those missing certificates,” interrupted Susan, still reprovingly shaking her head, “ were never further off, Miss Selina, than in my old morocco pocket-book with the silver clasps, which poor dear Captain Saville made me a present of when you was born !”—

“ And I, who have had it twenty times in my hands!”—cried Selina.—“ You told me, when I was a child, that it contained your mother’s wedding ring ;—and seeing papers in it, I concluded them to be family relires of your own.”

“ When Master Percy was born, my dear,” —resumed Susan, (in a low voice, as if she fancied there was still a Philip Askham at hand to overhear !) “ the table in my poor dear lady’s dressing-room was covered with papers,—which I knew were of the greatest consequence, but had other cares then on my

hands than to interfere with.—But somehow or another, (you'll excuse my plain speaking,) my mind always misgrudged me about Mr. Askham in regard to any matter in which your's and Master Edward's interests were concerned; and the first night I had to sit up in the dressing-room after all was safe with your poor dear mamma, happening to see a direction in her handwriting on a paper that was lying at my feet,—I took it up and read it;—and finding what it contained, for safety sake, removed the contents, to restore them to her when she got well again. She never *did* get well!—that is, never so well but that,—when I was about to put into her hand something that would so sadly bring to mind my first poor dear master, I had not courage to fluster her. And so, I put it off and off, till it was too late. And then, who was I to trust them to? Not, certainly, to Mr. Askham! So I laid them carefully by, certain that if they were ever wanted, they would be inquired after. For how could I possibly guess, my dear, that anything so sure and certain, (and well known to those whom it signified should know,) as that my poor lady was married by license in Rochester Cathedral, where the captain's company was in recruiting quarters, would ever come to

be called in question? I always intended when Master Edward grew a little less flighty, to give *him* the certificates. But of late, truth to tell, I have never thought of them at all!"

Selina made proof of her usual generous forbearance in abstaining to acquaint the poor old woman of the many evils of which her oversolicitude had been the origin;—evils which, on *one* point at least, Miss de Bayhurst regarded as irreparable!

For what occasion would ever be afforded her to insinuate to Lord Delvyn that the coldness,—the hauteur,—the reserve,—by which she had rendered impossible the proposals so often at the moment of escaping his lips,—had been produced not by pride, but humbleness,—not by indifference, but true affection? He had quitted the neighbourhood,—he had quitted the kingdom; and Lord Lynchmore had been of late continually joking about Venetian Countesses and Italian Principesse as the probable cause of his prolonged tour; so that, thanks to their miserable misunderstanding, before she saw him again, he would perhaps be the husband of another!

While all the country, therefore, was envying the fair proprietor of an estate which good management was gradually raising to the level

of the now shrunken and deteriorated property of Eden Castle, Selina was vainly attempting to find in the multiplicity and activity of her country pursuits, a refuge from the pangs of disappointed affection! She had no one to blame but herself! Had she been more candid with poor Susan, or had she controlled her pride sufficiently to come to an explanation with him who, she was persuaded, had *once* loved her with unqualified attachment, all, *all* might have gone well! But her secret grief was not the less poignant for the consciousness that it was of her own creation.

On one point, however, Selina's troubles were diminished.—Hitherto, under the conviction that she was never to be Lord Delvyn's wife, she had studiously avoided at Hexham every reminiscence likely to refresh the impressions of her early love.—She had even forbore to fix her eyes on his beautiful portrait by Lawrence, which constituted the chief ornament of the old hall; and whenever Lady Lynchmore indulged her maternal vanity by anecdotes of the popularity, or valour, or merit of her son, endeavoured to turn a deaf ear.

Lady Hester de Lacy was even forced to reprove her for unkindness to a fine old Irish setter belonging to her brother, which was fond of thrusting its shaggy head into her hand!

" You shouldn't be so ill-natured to poor Bryan during his master's absence, Lina," said she, " for he is all we have left to remind us of Del!"—

But now, everything was altered ; and poor Bryan's black muzzle was constantly seen resting on the knee or velvet dress of the heiress ; and when staying at Hexham, she deserted her usual place at the breakfast table, on pretence of a draught from the door, which she had never found inconvenient till an excuse was wanting for stationing herself where she might command a view of that dear picture,—whose open countenance seemed to shed sunshine upon her heart. The pretext she assigned, however, for so often turning her eyes in that direction, was one that her well-known love of paintings rendered plausible :—*viz.* her regret that Lawrence should have done such inadequate justice to the beauties of old Bryan, who was represented in attendance upon his master, with not quite the pencil of a Landseer.

In short, poor Lina was in love ; and, like other girls of eighteen, whether heiresses or not, as soft as wax under the ascendancy of that glowing influence.—Flattering herself that her manœuvres were unobserved, and that the secret of her attachment was buried deep in

her own heart, she tried to distract her attention from her perplexities by devoting her leisure to preparing Percy for the school that was to prepare him for Eton, which was to prepare him for the guards; for his choice of a profession had not been wanting in encouragement from the inclination of Selina and Edward towards the position in life occupied by their lamented father.

Even while thus employed, however, she managed to secure occasional tidings of the absent one, by having one or other of his sisters an inmate under her roof.

“Tell Lord Delvyn that if he persist in remaining abroad, we shall try to forget him as completely as he seems to have forgotten *us!*”—said she, one day, with crimson cheek and faltering accents, to Lady Harriet de Lacy, who, when addressing a letter from Edenbourne Lodge to her brother, had insisted upon a message to “poor Del.” To which few words, the lively girl saw fit to add, at her own suggestion, “it would, however, be somewhat difficult for your little wife to forget you; for she is not only continually inquiring about the probability of your return, but your old favourite, poor Bryan, whom she has most unwarrantably begged of my father, never leaves her side.”

Were we to hazard a statement of the exact number of days in which after the despatch of this letter to Naples, Lord Lynchmore's son and heir contrived to reach Hexham Hall, some officious critic who has swam in a gondola, would be sure to bring forward his road-book experience to prove the thing to be impossible ; and we should be having the “ great facts” of John Murray and Mrs. Starke flung like milestones in our teeth !—Suffice it, therefore, that when the happiest of men, (snatching at so much as a single leaf that could be supposed to belong to an olive branch,) really *did* arrive,—it was on a beautiful evening in May that he made his appearance at the Lodge ;—and that the lilacs were in full bloom and the nightingales in full song in the sequestered shrubbery in which the explanation of the lovers took place.

“ You deserve that I should make you the very worst husband in the world, Lina !”—whispered Lord Delvyn to the fair girl who hung upon his arm, while old Bryan stalked majestically by their side.—“ How could you ever fancy that such a difficulty,—even had it existed,—would make the smallest,—slightest,—faintest difference in my attachment !”—

So spake the Viscount ; and his grave rebuke  
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace  
Ineffable.

But still more convincing was the affectionate rejoinder of Selina!—

“ It was because I knew that it would *not*, I avoided putting your generosity to the trial !” pleaded she. “ Consider, too, what might have been the objections of Lord Lynchmore.”

“ Not of *Lord Lynchmore*, dearest,—for *his* heart is as warm as Midsummer.—But I will not quite answer for Lord Lynchmore’s lady. My poor mother has caught from Lady Grandison’s jargon the horrid word ‘ connexion !’ which, thank goodness, she can never exercise against *us*!—I *may* say *us* now,—mayn’t I, dearest Lina?—Mayn’t I, my faithful old Bryan?—Poor fellow! he seems to know what happy dogs we both are!—How very little I imagined that, during my absence, the faithful old brute was taking care of my darling little wife.”—

And so, *de fil en aiguille*, this happiest of weddings was at length celebrated at Edenbourne;—and William Scotney was the parson, and Harriet and Hester de Lacy the bridesmaids,—and Sir Edward de Bayhurst gave away the bride,—and Sophia, now the Hon. Mrs. William Scotney, presided at the wedding breakfast.—A happy home had already been provided for Mrs. Markham with the sons whom the noble competence secured by her

pupil, enabled to settle in life ;—and even Mr. Moran had not a fault to find with the match,—not even with the settlements made by Lord Lynchmore upon his daughter-in-law.—

Never had such a peal as shook the old tower of Edenbourne church on the departure of the bride and bridegroom for Lynchmore Castle, been rung in honour of the Askhams!—Never had the populace of the Market Place huzzaed so heartily as for her whom they had seen expand from childhood into the fulness of every womanly virtue and charm.—The bonfire on Eden Down was twice the height of that which excited the unlucky comments of poor Sir Erasmus, on occasion of Lady Uppingham's wedding ; and though Cecil Danby, (who arrived from town to officiate as bridesman to Del,) ventured to whisper aside to his fastidious friend Lady Lynchmore, that white tabinet, though a highly patriotic wedding garment for the heiress, was none of the lightest,—no one else saw cause for blame. Old Susan was far from the only person present who protested that, since the world was a world, never had it contained a bride so lovely as Lord Delvyn's Selina!—

Even her tears excited no disapprobation ;—for though she was giving her hand where her

heart had long been bestowed,—and though her prospects were without speck or blemish,—the marriage vows she held so sacred were pronounced kneeling before an altar that consecrated the grave of her mother!

With respect to what the young couple “intended to do for Ireland,” though Lord Lynchmore for once refrained from asking the question,—their design was pretty evident;—to spend there as much time and money, as they could spare from their beloved Lodge; where, during their absence, old Moutiar and Susan, retained the care of the chapel and Eastfield.

It was arranged between Selina and Edward, though her charge of little Percy was limited by her mother’s injunctions to the epoch of her marriage, that his vacations should be spent with the Delvyns,—till the young baronet should establish himself at Bayhurst on the attainment of his majority, with a steadiness affording security for the happiness of their adopted child.

CONCLUSION.

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DEAR reader—(yet away with false modesty!)—dear readers,—pluralissimé plural,—by thousands,—tens of thousands,—hundreds of thousands;—DEAR READERS,—you *all* know Philip Askham!—Ten months of every year, you see him daily in the window at White's,—dull,—dunny,—infirm of limb, and pasty of complexion,—vainly struggling to retain the air and outlines of youth; like some squalid lilac-bush in a London square, which every spring makes a painful attempt at florescence rendering its half-denuded branches yet more unsightly. The chronic rheumatism which he swears at under the name of gout, is the cause of closing the doors and windows of that venerable academy of Chesterfieldism, till its atmosphere has become opprobriated by younger and

more stirring members, as stuffy and insupportable.—But no less insupportable is the proximity of this “oldest inhabitant,”—of the club;—whether in spelling the newspapers, or emitting the contents of those of last week as the pretended *on dits* of the day.

Whenever, indeed, in passing White’s about five of the clock, you see Broughams dashing off like Cerito in her oblique step, from the door,—or cabriolets stealing away *à pas de loup* like Esler in the pantomime of a new ballet, while the *beau* window remains blank and featureless as the face of Young Eugland staring around in search of Sir Robert, when he has stolen a march upon it during one of its long speeches or visionary trances, and assumed unobserved a position millions of miles above its head,—be assured that the house has been cleared by the effete and threadbare anecdotes of Philip Askham!—When the aspect of his now fretful face portends to those on whose shoulders his company is strapped like that of the old man of the sea,—a pointless story, having Self only for the hero, and commencing with, “I remember some years ago, when the Allied Sovereigns were in this country,” or “you remind me of a circumstance that occurred to Brummel and myself at Carlton

House,"—no button strong enough to favour his fruitless endeavours to procure an audience.

Occasionally, indeed, some middle-aged man,—meaning to be good-natured towards one whom he remembers in his youth as one of the authorities of the spot,

(As thriving oaks ignoble broomsticks made  
Now sweep the alley they were meant to shade,)

observes to the abhorrent youngsters, "Quiz him if you will;—but I remember the time when every man in London dressed at him, and every woman for him!—Philip Askham was a man who commanded the fall of neck-cloths and the rise of *stocks*!"

But such sorry bolstering affords poor consolation for one whose dinner invitations are now as thin and scattered as his meagre locks;—shunned by the old, as a disagreeable monument of their age;—by the wise, as an unsightly relic of the era of fribbledom;—and by the young, prosperous, and spirited, as a bore!—*Self*,—the early object of his worship,—is all, *all* that remains!—

Of the rest of our *dramatis personæ*, little remains to relate.—The young Marquis of Uppingham was married last week to his cousin Margaret Hardynge, by her uncle Dr. Scotney,

the Dean of ——, to the joy of her parents and the satisfaction of his amiable mother;—while Lady Selina de Lacy, who was presented last season, is understood to be engaged to the promising son of the Middlemores, one of the most rising members of the day.

Of the dowager Lady Lynchmore, as the mother-in-law of our own Selina, we forbear to speak; more especially as she has become what the fashionable world calls “serious;” and on her toilet-table

Together lie her prayer-book and her paint,  
At once to improve the sinner and the saint !

While as regards the individual who was once Henry Askham, and is now a leading member of the administration and the Upper House, for our *own* sakes, we refrain!—His speeches are the glory of the Times; and, as the tortoise which still sustains the world of letters under the name of Petrel, observed the other day to the noble Emily, (whose looks become brighter, like the sapphire skies to which we formerly compared them, with every revolving spring,) “As well attempt to batter down Mont Blanc with Perkins’s steam-gun, as expect to unseat an administration substantiated by such solidity as his!”

And now, dear readers, a long farewell!—  
Afford a last proof of your good-will, by ac-  
cepting a thousand heartfelt acknowledgements  
of your indulgence, in' the name and on behalf of

CECIL and SELF!

THE END.

LONDON:

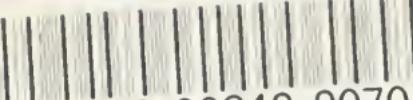
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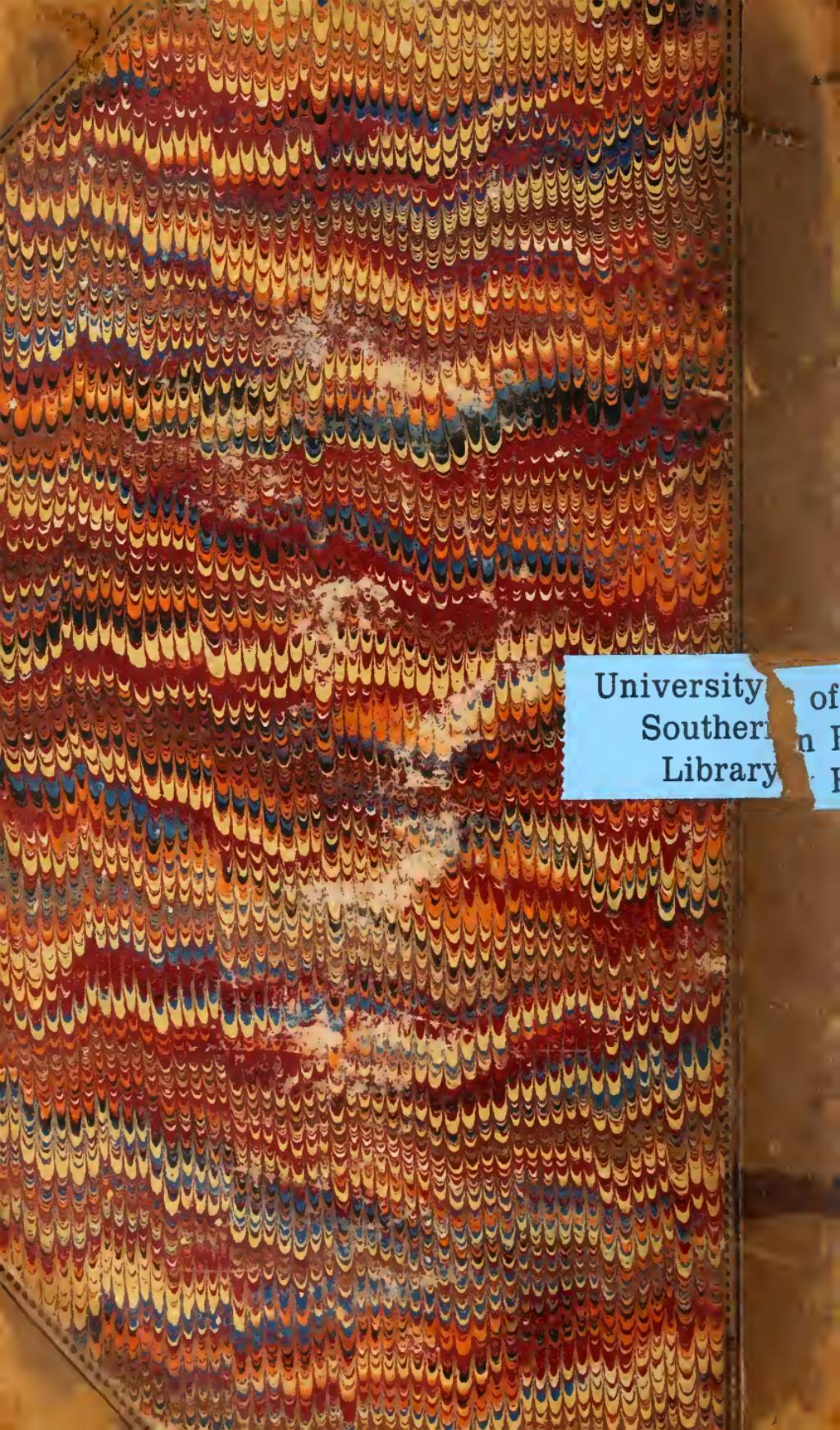
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